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NOTES OF THE WEEK

THE newspapers demanded a "White Christmas" and the public got one. Such is the power of the Press. But they got besides a number of things they neither asked for nor desired. Broken communications, floods, burst water-pipes, bruised limbs—these were the surprise packets impishly dropped into the nation's stockings this Christmas-tide. Snow is seasonable and brings enjoyment to children and a hardy minority of adults, but for the great majority it entails discomfort and even worse. When the thaw comes the resulting floods are likely to be very serious, and thousands will suffer loss.

The way things have of not happening when there are no newspapers to record them has often been remarked. This year the Boxing Day holiday from news was followed by no such emptiness in Tuesday's papers. There was one long tale of disasters. One London newspaper, which on Saturday used its "streamer" headline to wish its readers "a happy Christmas," was compelled in its next issue to record the results of its benediction thus (we quote the main headlines on the front page from left to right, without omission):

"Drifts 15 feet deep; roads and railways blocked; widespread floods; 4,000 telephone wires out of action in London; Disease sweeps 13 counties; Train runs into landslide; midnight plight of passengers; rescued by car; Police raid a dance club; Famous church destroyed; week-end of fire disasters; 4 firemen killed; Airwoman's fate in a storm." Other items on the same page included, "cellulose deaths," "omnibus loses its roof," "Big Ben's holiday lapse," "man impaled in a park," "three motorists drowned," and two suicide attempts. Sport provided the relief, which was confined to three items: Britain had regained the sculling championship, England was leading in the test match in South Africa, and Mr. Cyril Tolley was engaged to be married. A white Christmas, or a black?

The outlook for the new Prayer Book is much more hopeful. The decision of the Bishops, as outlined in the statement issued by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York just before Christmas, followed closely the lines predicted in our last issue. Impetuosity has been met with patience. The Church Assembly is to take back the Measure rejected by the Commons, to make "such changes, and such changes only, as may tend to remove misapprehensions," and thus to resubmit it to Parliament. Precisely

**NOISE
DESTROYS
NERVES**

Heed the Scientists' warning
and instal
Call up the nearest
Remington Office for help

**Remington-Noiseless
TYPEWRITERS**

what this means we must wait till February, when the Assembly meets, to discover, but evidently the changes are to be mainly of an explanatory kind.

This is wise. Rejection in the Commons was the result of over-haste and under-digestion. The Measure was not comprehended. Now Parliament is to have time to reconsider and opportunity to learn more accurately what exactly the new Prayer Book means. What the result will be no one will be so rash as to predict after the last shock, but we shall be surprised if the Book is rejected a second time. Even if the proposed modifications do not satisfy the Joynson-Hicks group, as they more than possibly will not, it is probable that, with due preparation of the ground, reason will this time triumph over instinct among the majority.

Meanwhile the Church is faced with the difficult task of maintaining discipline in the midst of chaos. The Bishops, who, as has been freely pointed out, cannot in common sense forbid the use in the interim of the Book they have already recommended, have requested the clergy, in the name of loyalty, not to use it. If there is to be discipline it will have to be self-discipline. "Calmness," say the Archbishops, "will be the highest form of courage" and self-restraint and self-sacrifice the "truest proofs of loyalty." We would draw attention to the letter from the Bishop of Liverpool which we print on another page.

Although China is essentially an agricultural country, the distant observer grows so accustomed to considering all Chinamen as Tuchuns or the soldiers who march to their orders that he is apt to forget the existence of the Chinese peasant. The news that some four million peasants in Shantung and Chihli are in imminent danger of death from starvation therefore comes with a greater sense of shock. It will be difficult to help the famine victims without helping those generals who have made famine inevitable; but this country will doubtless, as it has often done before, respond generously to the appeal from the International Famine Relief Commission. It will do so hoping for no better return than that the Chinese may realize that these war-lords are not only the enemies of the foreigner, but of China herself.

M. Briand has given to *Le Matin* an optimistic interview on the European situation. It is certainly true that we can face 1928 much more cheerfully than 1927. A year ago the Italo-Albanian trouble was coming to a head as a result of the signature of the First Tirana Treaty; the effects of the squabbles over Germany's admission to the League were still felt. During 1927 we have been, in M. Briand's words, "on the brink of great dangers"; but things had to become worse before they could become better. Poland and Germany, Poland and Lithuania, Italy and France, are all on the point of beginning negotiations which should have big results. Relations between Great Britain and Russia are bad, but

they were worse before Sir Austen Chamberlain and M. Litvinov met in Geneva early this month. On the whole it may be said that there are signs of improvement in every political, financial or economic dispute of international importance in Europe. Only Anglo-American affairs are in a worse pass to-day than they were a year ago. Here we may hope that common sense and goodwill will compose all differences.

Since the suppression by the French authorities of the autonomist papers in Alsace matters have been going from bad to worse. Now the houses of between sixty and seventy prominent persons in Alsace and Lorraine have been searched by the police for evidence that the autonomist movement is supported by German money. We shall be astonished if such evidence is not forthcoming. The Germans would be more than human if they did not seek to make capital out of the very real causes of discontent. But action against those Alsations who are turning back to Germany will not lead to peace. Had France realized immediately after the war that Alsace was accustomed to a higher level of material civilization than the other French provinces there would now be virtually no autonomist movement at all, for the Alsatian had no great affection for Prussian methods of government. It is one of the tragedies of Western Europe that the refusal in Paris to make good an initial mistake should be driving back to Germany two provinces which so steadfastly held out for fifty years against German "Kultur."

When Signor Mussolini first came into power he rashly promised to bring the exchange value of the lira up to about fifty to the pound sterling within six months. Judged by this declaration his achievement in stabilizing at a little over ninety may not seem very praiseworthy, but a dictator cannot keep all his promises. The fact that a prosperous industrial country like Belgium had to stabilize at rates almost twice as unfavourable has probably helped the *Duce* to swallow his pride and borrow money on rather severe terms from the City and Wall Street. Further delay would have had serious consequences. The present economic crisis in Italy is due rather to uncertainty than to any lack of initiative. The rapid growth in unemployment figures should now be checked, Italian merchants and foreign investors will feel safer than they have done at any time since the Fascist revolution, and Europe is brought one step nearer that financial stability which is an essential condition of its own and of British prosperity.

The process of trustification in the newspaper world continues unchecked. Last Friday brought the announcement that control of the *Daily Telegraph* has been acquired by what is generally known as "the Berry Group"—namely the well-known Press combination of which the three leading members are Sir William Berry, Mr. Gomer Berry and Sir Edward Iliffe.

These newspaper proprietors, who already direct an enormous and ever-growing number of organs in London and the provinces and in Scotland, by the purchase of the *Telegraph* acquire their first London daily newspaper of the more serious sort. In buying it they have bought a great tradition and a great responsibility. Lord Burnham, the relinquishing proprietor, has unwaveringly maintained in the *Telegraph* the standards of excellence and independence set by his father and his grandfather before him, and though of late years the paper has been less conspicuous than some it has not on that account been ineffective. On the contrary, in its capacity as almost the last of the independently owned journals it has been a tower of strength to all that is really good in journalism. Lord Burnham and his predecessors well understood the decaying maxim that the real proprietors of a newspaper are the public and that its nominal proprietors hold it in trust for them. It is to be hoped, for the good of Fleet Street and the country, that this excellent tradition will be carried on under the new regime.

The international committee of experts appointed to inquire into the archaeological finds at Glozel has issued its report, which declares the majority of the finds to be fakes. Had the discoveries been pronounced authentic the questions raised would have been prodigious; but those raised by the decision that they are forgeries are by no means unimportant. Until the full report is available comment on the scientific aspects of this decision must be deferred, but a number of other questions require an answer. Who put the objects in the ground? Why did he do so? How did he manage to do so unobserved? How came Dr. Morlet and the original excavators to be so completely deceived? The hoaxer obviously had considerable archaeological knowledge; it almost passes belief that such a man in his senses should have thought it more amusing to spend time and money on an elaborate and skilful hoax than to use his gifts in the genuine advancement of archaeology.

The result of the first test match against South Africa is satisfactory, although the batting collapse in the English first innings was a little surprising. Eight members of the team made fourteen among the lot of them, and of these seven were made by one man. But, if this is a little alarming, Hammond's performances with both bat and ball are very reassuring. There is one further circumstance of the match which deserves mention. We refer to the reports of it which have reached this country from South Africa. Considering the great public interest taken in it here, these have been disappointingly dry and meagre. For example, Mr. H. Promnitz has been described as a "mystery-bowler." He practised, we were informed, in secret and was first unmasked against the English team in the test match, when he did something to justify his previous seclusion by taking five wickets for fifty-eight. But, though he is no longer a mystery to the English batsmen, he remains one to English readers, who do not know whether he bowls fast or slow or with his right hand or his left.

1927: A POLITICAL RETROSPECT

IN history, as in music, harmony and melody are sometimes obscured during the passage from one broad theme to its successor. The years are difficult to characterize or summarize, "passage work," as the musicians would call it. The dread theme of the war is past, but we are still working our way through baffling modulations to the happier theme that is to come. Such years are difficult to characterize or summarize, for they begin in the middle of many subjects and end without concluding any.

This has been almost a dull year, and yet throughout we have had the consciousness of great events being toward if we could only seize the logic of its complicated happenings. Perhaps the most striking, certainly the most hopeful, event of the whole year has been the acceptance by the Trades Union Council of the employers' invitation to a conference. Even if the new year may disappoint hope, that has been, for reasons we discussed only last week, the brightest light shone this year. We seem to be on the way (though it may still be a long way) to a new view of the place of trade unions in the State. The Trade Disputes Act, which was the principal legislative work of the year, was aimed at the political strike as a means of applying coercion to the State, and contributed to a new conception of trade union duties by making criminal certain recent perversions of trade union activity. The new conference may supply the positive of which the Trade Union Act is the negative, and may lead to the direct logical antithesis of the policy that made the General Strike. Thus 1927, inconclusive as it has been, may yet be marked with a white stone in the history of British trade unionism. Certainly the mood of trade unionism at the close of this year is in most wholesome contrast with its mood twelve months ago.

Apart from this new movement towards peace in industry, Parliamentary politics have been uneventful. There has been a slight improvement in the discipline of the Labour party in Parliament, and though the session has been disfigured by disorderly scenes, they can most of them be paralleled from the history of the two older parties. Liberalism is apparently gaining some ground in the country, but it has, like the Labour Party, been generally ineffective in Parliament, except on the occasions when it has supported the Government. Mr. Lloyd George, in particular, has lost ground as a parliamentary force all the year. The weakness of the Opposition has impaired the vigour of Parliament, and denied to many young Conservatives the chances of distinction which would have been theirs had the strength of parties been more even. Nor has the subject matter of Parliamentary debate been of first-rate importance. But the quality of the House of Lords set debates has convinced many that the reform of the House of Lords is among the least urgent of political questions, and that a reform of the Commons, and of some of its procedure, might well take precedence.

Finance is the master question in politics, not unemployment, on which the House of Commons has had a long series of inconclusive debates, and it is in finance that the failure of the House of Commons has been most conspicuous. This year's Budget was a masterpiece of ingenuity, and was defended by Mr. Churchill with a rhetorical skill which gave unfailing entertainment. But the fear is beginning to oppress us that Mr. Churchill may be one of those brilliant men who win all the battles and yet lose the war. It may well be that the great problem of economy (on which the recovery of industry and so many other good causes depend) may be insoluble along present lines; but if so the end of the year finds the electors more than ever anxious that the Government should take them into their confidence and indicate with less evasion what constructive ideas they have on finance. The Government have rightly refused to be frightened out of the enfranchisement of women on the same terms as men. An Unemployment Insurance Bill has added a useful (but incidentally a shockingly drafted) statute to the growing body of Conservative social legislation, but these activities only serve to show up, by contrast, the Government's constructive failure in the all-important cause of national economy.

There have been several events of first-rate importance in Dominion and foreign affairs. Ireland seems to be gradually settling down, but the two general elections of the year have once more illustrated the truth that a strong Government is almost impossible to obtain under P. R., and that it must inevitably imply coalition government in some form or other. In opposing the despatch of troops to China, and still more in assuming that China has been miraculously converted to Communism, Labour this year made profoundly mistaken readings of the facts which have done its reputation much harm. In fact, events in China seem likely to lead to a complete rupture of diplomatic relations with Russia, if not to a long estrangement between the two countries, for it now seems abundantly clear that however long the present anarchy lasts in China it will not result in a triumph for the insignificant fraction of Communists.

But the chief event in foreign affairs during the year has been the failure of the Geneva Conference on naval disarmament. That it has lost an opportunity of making naval economies is the smallest of the consequences, for other opportunities will recur. Far more serious is the danger of political coldness between us and the United States as a result of disagreement before the rest of the world. It is quite evident that the whole negotiations were ill-managed, especially on our side, and the moral is that the efforts must be renewed and preceded by a complete preliminary understanding between us and America. There are not wanting good suggestions for the basis of such an understanding, and our Government, by cutting down their cruiser programme, have recognized that anything like naval competition between us and the United States would be meaningless. The cloud may be no bigger than a man's hand yet, but it is black, and the very worst enemies of our friendship and the peace of the world are those who pretend not to see it.

AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE DOGS

VERY strong protest has been aroused in many parts of the country by the actual and prospective developments of greyhound racing. To some extent, it is true, such protest comes from those who are by constitution kill-joys, but it is impossible to represent the objections as issuing solely or mainly from persons habitually engaged in restricting the amusements of the people. The enemies of greyhound racing are not merely a body of embittered faddists; they include many who take a liberal view of the popular devotion to sport, and who on principle are opposed to constant interference with the liberty of the individual to amuse himself as he chooses. For ourselves we regard greyhound racing as a poor form of sport, in which there is a great deal of betting to very little genuine recreation, and which, since it is carried on in or near great centres of population, is likely to aggravate very considerably the evils of excessive betting. But, on the other hand, we heartily loathe the notion of badgering any section of the people in respect of its recreations, even when they are foolish, and we are quite sure that the betting instinct, which is not reprehensible until indulged to excess, cannot be driven out of this people.

To be sure, there are differences between greyhound racing and horse racing other than the substitution of the dog for the horse. The improvement of horse breeding, which depends largely on racing, itself dependent largely on betting, is of national importance: the breeding of greyhounds is not of national concern, and can be maintained without any greyhound racing at all. Further, greyhound racing means betting brought to the doors of the people, whereas on the whole horse racing does not mean that. But, when all is said, it does appear unfair to stamp out betting on greyhound racing, in the main the poor man's recreation, while the State countenances, and the most reputable persons indulge in, betting on horse racing, to the profit of the Exchequer. Restraints on greyhound racing, in response to local opposition to its establishment in certain areas, and through such a controlling body as its patrons may establish, are to be welcomed; but total prohibition, which is urged now by a good many people, and which the Government are at least considering, does not seem to us a sound policy. It would in all likelihood encourage restriction on other and more worthy sports on narrower and more shaky moral grounds, and a nation irritatingly restricted in a hundred ways ever since the war may well be jealous of its few surviving liberties.

The main objection to betting, among those who are not rabid puritans, is that it discourages thrift. But it is quite possible to combine thrift, though perhaps not the very best kind of thrift, with the enjoyment of a sporting chance. The State, which has recognized betting, and is deriving revenue from it, is capable of giving it a virtually harmless turn and at the same time adding to its own gains from that source. All that is required is that it should institute premium bonds, carrying a low rate of interest with chances of large prizes. By such a system

it would give back to very many of those who now lose relatively large sums on betting at least the capital they ventured, with modest interest till the date of cancellation; and it would hold before them the chance of gains substantially larger than the turf or the greyhound track offer. Those who are seized with moral paroxysms at the mention of this far from novel idea need to be reminded that the average man of small means, in the absence of any such opportunity as the scheme would provide, is sorely tempted to bet. For though the economist may preach to him that a penny can be made, by exceptional persons, the foundation of a fortune, the average man feels it is hardly worth while laying by minute sums, the income from which, even after some years of accumulation, would do little more than keep him in tobacco.

Give the man a chance of a large prize without risk to his capital, and he will invest his little sums to the advantage alike of himself and the State. The ethical aspect of the matter has been debated to weariness in past years. With the examples of many continental countries before us, and with the Exchequer already profiting by the recognition of betting, it is sheer hypocrisy to recoil from premium bonds as too abhorrent to be thought upon. It is through premium bonds alone that the ineradicable betting propensities of the British people can be made to subserve increased personal thrift where there is now waste, and increased national revenue.

THE FILM AS LITERATURE

BY ERNEST BETTS

IT is not surprising that after thirty years of erratic history no literature of the film exists. (I use the term "literature" in the sense in which it is applied to poetry, drama, and the novel, as distinct from scientific works on the one hand and the whole body of ephemeral writings on the other.) We have been given one or two film productions which may take "classical" rank, but that is a rash word to apply to films. None of the old buttresses of criticism sustains this insubstantial fabric; they serve a temporary purpose. For having no literature we have no criticism, save the equivocal or sensational or frankly ignorant stuff which fills up the columns of the popular Press. Some of this, with many technical embellishments, attempts to enter the region of high seriousness, and the plain story, distinguished by nothing but its box-office merits, is stuck into a great quarto of glorification and glued for ever in dubious academics. Work of this kind, such as 'The Nibelungs,' 'He Who Gets Slapped,' 'A Woman of Paris,' and so on, though striking and beautiful in many ways cannot by any means be classed as film literature in the best sense. It comes in such a questionable shape. It may be that Chaplin or Stroheim or Fritz Lang, with one or two Swedish and Russian producers, have added something of permanence to films as an art, but I do not see how we can say this until we know what are the qualities which make for permanence in the film.

Concerning this aspect of the matter not much is known, though more seems to be known (or rather said) in France than in England. To place the film firmly in its proper setting, as a vehicle for story or drama, we need to get away from the "opulent

sinuosities" which Sainte Beuve condemned—in a phrase which takes the measure of nine films out of ten. Scarcely any serious attempts have yet been made outside Mr. Vachell Lindsay's 'Art of the Motion Picture' (now unobtainable) and M. Moussinac's 'Naissance du Cinéma,' to strip the film bare, to discover what is underneath, to study its skeleton and anatomy. Mr. Vachell Lindsay's study is certainly a work of imagination, and strikes out many illuminating ideas from the unformed mass of film precept and practice. It does move with the picture. M. Moussinac, on the other hand, is laboriously technical. He solemnizes the art. And though the subject is deeply surveyed and analysed, one has a feeling, reproduced in much current criticism of films, that the writer has laid the living essence of his theme under a great pile of technical bricks and mortar.

Manifestly during the youth of the film we can only discover first principles by reference to those which govern other art forms. We appeal to the next of kin. It has been said that there is no organic relation between the motion picture and the novel or short story. Film criticism is full of these blithe negatives, in which directors are told exactly what is not a good story and left to imagine exactly what is a good story. But the moment we place a novel by Balzac or Stevenson, let us say (whom I choose for their graphic qualities), side by side with a work of comparable value in film production, such as 'The Last Laugh,' we see that the artistic merit of a motion picture has many affinities, in conception and treatment, in substance and form, with the well-made novel. It tells a story with beginning, middle and end, and if it fails to adopt this well-tried scheme it fails altogether. 'The Last Laugh,' representing an uninspiring catastrophe in the life of a hotel commissionaire, was successful for the same reason, among others, as 'Jew Suss' was successful—as a minute, faithful and fatal study in character in which some sort of relationship is established between the universal and the particular. Though it be utterly false doctrine to translate a novel into film terms, yet the fact that something memorable, some glittering point lighting up the whole subject, stays in the mind long afterwards in the adapted stories of Maupassant or Pirandello, for instance, suggests that literature and the film have more in common than is supposed—so long as we do not press the parallel too far. Schnitzler's 'Fräulein Else,' virtually written as a film scenario, is a good example of this interdependence; so also is Mr. Galsworthy's 'Escape.'

But having carried the analogy to its danger-point, we must turn back, and then back again (passing the old and torn-up roads of story technique as we go) to the first principle of all cinematographic art—movement as the material of an art form, with its natural background of stillness; the breathing before the breathless. We must make up our minds what is to be rendered in motion and what excluded, and we must give value to the infinitely variable gears of this moving technique. It is useless to imagine pictorially a story already written, such as 'The Old Wives' Tale,' and then to lop off great branches of dead or immovable matter from the general design. We need to build up the outline of the story from the beginning in motion, choosing a theme whose specific quality is not character in action merely (as in drama) but whose purpose can be achieved by action only, and in no other way. The film is a plant which cannot be stopped growing. When it stops it is dead. The action of a true cinematographic theme strains the technical fabric around it to breaking-point, so that its movement is continuously active, like wind against sail from beginning to end. It is for this reason that 'Warning Shadows' (which shows the limitations of the film) is truer to the motion-picture form, and more memorable, than any of the sub-titled productions of Charlie Chaplin. The one we remember because it

was a good picture, the other because it was a good joke. We remember them both because they are full of life.

Yet as soon as we ask ourselves whether these pictures will survive scrutiny as film literature, all our judgments are assailed. We are confronted with peaks in a volcanic region whose levels are constantly shifting. Motion cannot be captured, imprisoned and given an identity disc. The visual images running headlong and delightedly after each other are symbols of incalculable value, but valuable only in so far as they can dispense with words. Donne's line, "Go and catch a falling star" at once illustrates the difference between the verbal image and the pictorial image. The rhythm, spirit, and command of this line are incommunicable in film terms; yet the line is full of action. This is not to deny that the film has an authentic artistry of its own. What is wrong with it as an art is that it is too articulate, it wants all economy. It has an incredible conceit which dresses up the simplest story in irrelevant finery. Now and then, owing to accidents over which the film merchants have no control, it turns out a delicious and lightly turned story such as 'Forbidden Paradise' or 'The Passionate Lover,' in which the construction and the quality of the acting are infinitely superior to the average play. These essays are worth binding. But when all is said, and as we add one good piece to another to gain the right focus, we still have a strange feeling of being defrauded. We think of having our money returned. And this is not only because, as Wilde observed, we should all appreciate sunsets more keenly if we had to pay for them—and we have had to pay for this. It is because the whole level of film art is in reality cruder, wilder, more wanton and less significant (being of thinner texture) than the other arts. Its triumph is magnitude and plasticity. Nobody would deny that Niagara Falls is a success; but humanity likes occasionally to fill its kettle at a less terrifying source.

The film play has every quality but proportion, every kind of verisimilitude but solidity. At its best it still lacks depths and root, but it can perform marvels within its right boundaries, and it is rapidly developing a fine fantastic literature of its own. This will be a quite different literature from that we know—bound to quick rhythms, incessant changes of scene and many amazements of decoration and lighting, so that the eye will be constantly entertained, the senses refreshed, and the mind kept to its business. The question arises: Who will set boundaries to this unruly creature? How are we to call halt to the "screen epics," "immortal tragedies" and works of genius which are discovered in Berlin, Stockholm, Moscow and Los Angeles every week? Never in history have we had such a flow of masterpieces! We were told that 'Vaudeville' was a masterpiece. Yet it was a masterpiece only to those critics whose minds had been so dulled by infinite successions of screen trickery at infinite numbers of trade shows that a dart of illumination here and there, a daring leap into mid-air surpassing the leaps of Douglas Fairbanks and Tom Mix, led them into raptures. 'Vaudeville' was a fine picture, but not, I think, a specimen of film literature. Posterity will think little of it when the screen discovers its speech and gives it something to think about.

There is an hypnotic quality in film plays which sweeps the spectator out of reality into dreams, and these dreams do not always look well by day. They will look better when we have learned to look for less. A great task of destruction must be undertaken before the age-long tradition of simplicity, directness and sincerity can begin to penetrate the minds of the makers of film stories. A new generation is wanted for this. Everywhere the same dense, mechanical and syrupy notions are being thrust into the same framework by men who are terrified of ideas

unless they add up to a ten per cent. dividend. And these productions are hailed afterwards as triumphs of technique, lighting, acting, direction or what not, but never as triumphs of story-making or literature. Makers of the film of the future will have to add to it, by their own methods, this new significance, but by a process of subtraction rather than multiplication.

SURPRISES IN AMERICA

By ERNEST DIMNET

Denver, December, 1927

VOLTAIRE, at the end of one of his letters, adds the postscript: "Does everything go wrong, as usual?" In America you never feel as if anything went wrong. On the contrary, you gradually come to the conclusion that everything is so astonishingly satisfactory that it is sinful to suspect it might be improved. You do read about an occasional lynching or, of course, the daily murder in Chicago, but what are those lurid sparks in the vast blue of the American firmament? Thanksgiving comes, and President Coolidge testifies before heaven and earth to unprecedented prosperity. The end of the fiscal year comes, and here is the report of Secretary Hoover couched in such sober language that the figures it gives to represent the volume of business, the surplus of exports, the increase of *per capita* fortune, etc., fairly knock you down with surprise. It seems as if everybody in the United States had only one unsatisfied wish, and that was to know what the new Ford is like. The consequence is that when the disclosure of something really unexpected happens near enough to one to appear as something more real than mere newspaper stuff, it seems as if the fabric of the world were threatening to collapse.

I was in Northern California when the rebellion in Folsom Penitentiary took place. No fiction could read like the newspaper reports I saw during the three or four ensuing days. If the American reporter could invent what he narrates his fame ought to be undying. I never read anything so vivid and terrifying as this rebellion of eight hundred convicts, gentle and well-behaved overnight, next morning refusing to walk out of their quarters to work, barricading themselves, securing four guards as hostages, killing one who refused to hand over his keys, and promptly opening a brisk fire on the remaining guards in sight.

Extraordinary scenes were related: one other guard inside the cells was stalked from behind by six or seven prisoners and stabbed by them all at a given signal; another guard, apparently a favourite with the men, was shot at by one of these, but the convict who had the impudence to do so was trampled to death at once by the fellows near him. The name of one, Brown, who led the rebellion will not easily be effaced from my memory. I have always been too much on the side of an infuriated tiger in a menagerie to compare this Brown to one; but what this man did, said and looked, during those two days, far exceeded what our imagination of a sanguinary fiend could depict. But the surprise of hearing that at least half a dozen revolvers, with plenty of munitions, were found in the possession of the convicts, that the knives collected from them after their surrender—brought about by a threat to cut off their water—filled three baskets; and that several charges of stolen dynamite were hidden in one of their cells!

One wonders, till one reads that the damage to the smoking-room or recreation hall was valued at \$30,000, and could only be exceeded by that done to the library! Nothing is heard of the manicurist's parlour, but the whole picture becomes clear: Daudets in France escape from gaol because prison directors are

too much under the influence of politicians; American prisoners rebel and become savage because there is too much lenience, too much of the national prosperity, in American penitentiaries.

Five weeks ago I was in this same town of Denver from which I am now writing. A strike was on at a Colorado mining camp not very far away. Here, again, the local newspapers were full of colour. There was no Brown to thrill you with terror, but one Milka, a Balkan-born girl, apparently of extraordinary energy and eloquence, was quite enough to make the newspaper worth reading. She was evidently another person than the State governor, who was doing his best with pretty poor results. There was something fiery and feverish in all the reports coming from those mountains which was not by any means in the usual American picture. And frequent allusions to the I.W.W., whom one is tempted to forget every time one meets New York radicals, added to the uncomfortable feeling. I asked what the miners wanted, and I was told that they wanted a "rise" of seventy-five cents a day. I asked how much their wage was, and the answer was six dollars and fifty cents a day, whereupon I thought the workmen unreasonable.

Now, coming back to this same Denver, after more than a month, I find the newspapers still full of the Colorado strike, and, during my absence, several men have lost their lives in riots up there. I ask, "Can't these men be satisfied with thirty-five dollars a week?" "Oh, but"—the answer is—"they only work three days a week, you see." Oh! unexpected America! My reaction is very strong. I feel as if the American Government ought to say to all of us, its debtors: "Don't you see that we need money to keep those men alive?" And I would work overtime, as I have done for a considerable part of my life, but without a grumble.

ON FUNDAMENTALISM

BY GERALD GOULD

ONE has heard, of course, of human nature. Two propositions seem to be pretty well established about it: one, that it doesn't change, and the other, that it does. But when people enunciate the former of these truths, they add the word: "Fundamentally." What a safeguard! There is much virtue in your fundamentals.

I had occasion, the other day, in the course of an article about the future, to say a casual word about the past. I said that human nature changed: it was no use, I urged, saying that it didn't, because it did. (I had forgotten "fundamentally" for the moment.) I was thinking, and I fondly supposed that the context had made it clear I was thinking, of certain codes and psychological reactions. I was protesting against the easy laugh that is so often raised nowadays by nailing the standards of modernity to the ancient masts, surrounding Helen or Cleopatra with flappers, and confusing the Sophists with the sophomores.

Some things, I admitted, remain. I instanced Homer, both for change and for similarity. We can still feel with Andromache and with Priam; if there were not that amount in common, we should scarcely read Homer at all. But put Achilles, with his motives and his methods, into a modern story of war, and what would be said about him? That he was incredible, or that he was a cad. Our cad is Homer's hero: that does seem to indicate a change. It is not

merely that morals, in the sense of conventions and correctitudes, have altered; so much is happening all round us to-day. It is that character has altered. No person living to-day can get inside the mind of Achilles, and feel *with* him, and feel *for* him, and know what he was to himself. There is a change in nature. If we felt like that about a contemporary portrait, we should think it proved that the author had failed to draw reality. About Homer we think the opposite. His Achilles is so real to us because he is so different from us. The reality is in the change.

Well, as so often happens when I venture to write anything, a lady wrote to say that I was wrong. Human nature, she pointed out, did not change—*fundamentally*. Her theory was that there used to be something, fundamentally different from human nature, which went on changing and developing and evolving, till at some point unspecified it made a fundamental change, and became human nature; and that since then it (but ought I to be calling it "it"?) has—*fundamentally*—changed no more. This theory frightens me, because it appears to suppose itself to be biological. I am not going to precipitate myself into the discussion about the origin of species, and be gored alternately by the fell incensed points of Mr. Belloc and Mr. Wells. My interest is not so much evolutionary as adverbial. If there is some nature which was once not human, and now is human—some power not ourselves that makes for us-ishness—then it has changed; but if it has *merely* changed—if it is itself, but with modifications—then at no point has it changed *fundamentally*. If on the other hand the fundamentals have been uprooted and replaced, we are confronted not with change but with novelty.

Out upon it!—I flee from the menace of biology, only to find myself plunging into the quagmire of metaphysics! And I don't want biology, I don't want metaphysics. What I want—what, let me say, since the word "want" is ambiguous, I am desiderating—is a little common sense.

We use the word—you know the word I mean—too freely. It is nonsense to say—you know what—unless we have first decided what the fundamentals are. I do it myself. Everybody does it. But when other people do it to *one*—that is different, fundamentally.

New Year resolutions and the belief in conversion both take for granted the possibility of change. We know exactly where the foundations come with these. The converted soul remains the same soul; it is the sinner, not somebody entirely new, who is saved; but everything about him except his spiritual identity puts on the light of primordially; he is renovated to the basement, even if the foundations stay. That such renewal does to all appearance happen is a matter of common experience: what it signifies is a matter of mystical faith, which I should not here presume to discuss. The New Year offers us a lighter and more topical theme. Good resolutions imply that we can change ourselves; that we can even, if we put the foundations high, change ourselves *fundamentally*: change ourselves, that is, in all the important aspects and relations of our characters. For the external act which we undertake to perform is to be the expression of an altered spirit. By itself, it would be both impossible and insignificant.

Take that resolution of my own—to bathe before breakfast every morning in the Serpentine, h. or c.—shall I carry *that* through, while I remain myself? Or Smith-Jones's resolution, to forgo tittle-tattle? Why, before he can live up to silence, he must demolish the whole fabric of interests built up through New Years how numerous! And—harder still!—he must erect something fresh in its place. What, at his time of life, will he substitute for the doors of mockery and the windows of spite, for all those domes and pinnacles of detestation and detraction which used to take the morning and the evening sun? Naked will he lie, neglected, on the slippery verge of non-existence. *Some* foundation must remain, something to bear his title and his memory. Peering down as into a well, we shall call "Smith-Jones" (or, lest there be anybody who really goes by that name, let me put any other in its place), and scarcely will he look up to answer. No, no: let him live on with his lies and innuendoes: rob him of his robbery of reputations, and you leave him poor indeed. Poor? Do you indeed leave him anything? Crane down the gloomy gap, incline your ear for his whisperings. What, all silent? Bless thee, Smith-Jones (or Brown-Robinson), thou art translated. Thou art changed fundamentally. There is an end of thee.

So it is with every comparison. The good lady who contradicted me fell into the fallacy of supposing that all change must be fundamental, whereas it would be easier to maintain that, in strict literalness and logic, no change can be fundamental; since fundamental change would not be change at all, but extinction. I shall make my New Year resolutions in the comfortable certitude that there will be no fundamental change: the resolutions will not be kept. One of them will be to give up saying "fundamentally."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

¶ *The Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW welcomes the free expression in these columns of genuine opinion on matters of public interest, although he disclaims responsibility alike for the opinions themselves and the manner of their expression.*

¶ *Letters on topical subjects, intended for publication the same week, should reach him on Tuesday.*

THE PRAYER BOOK

SIR,—The first two "Notes" in your last week's issue have admirably set forth the true, that is the spiritual, disaster involved in the House of Commons decision on the Prayer Book. There is, indeed, real constructive work awaiting us. Young people are bewildered and repelled by our interminable wrangles. It seems to them that we are less concerned with God than with competing methods of approach to Him. Thoughtful and hard-working men and women are ready to consider reasonable statements of divine activity in life as they see life, and so to "make sense" of the modern world. In our contact with non-Christians here and overseas we are rapidly learning how to develop old methods of Evangelism in the light of our own knowledge both of divine creative work and of human mental processes, and especially by renewed study of first contacts recorded in the Gospels between Christ and individuals, and groups and masses of men. Church people, both leaders and led, are prepared and eager to concentrate upon these tasks.

The Bishops' policy would have cleared the way for them. It may be briefly stated thus. The Book of

1927 applies the doctrinal standards of the Book of 1662 to modern conditions, and it limits them. What is excluded the Bishops believe themselves able, and are pledged, to prevent. Armed with a Book carrying the whole authority of the Anglican Church, endorsed by the State, and acting for the first time together, we could have done so. But we demand the right to act patiently, not applying legal enforcement till in an atmosphere of growing loyalty (and it is growing fast) the legal line could have been more and more clearly drawn and generally accepted. Then the new Church Courts would have come at the proper time and for their proper purpose, not to create, but to maintain order.

This bold and Christian policy was not understood by the Commons, because it was not explained to them, and therefore the old short-sighted and paralyzing fear of "tendencies" was left to dominate their minds. The result is that the recent outburst of crude and fanatical religious passion is given a new lease of life. But even so I believe that in responsible quarters 1928 will bring calm reflection and wiser counsels. In the meantime the inarticulate appeal of the world to the Church is not unheeded, and the hope of a response is delayed but not destroyed.

I am, etc.,

Bishop's Lodge, Liverpool ALBERT LIVERPOOL

INCOME-TAX INQUISITORS

SIR,—One of the most enduring errors of the public is as to income-tax assessors. These local officials issue forms for returns of income, receive them back, and copy the details into lists or assessment books. Assessments, the amounts on which tax is demanded, are made by the District Inspector of Taxes or his staff. Nominally, in strict law, they must be made by the District Commissioners, the additional, or assessing variety, who are supposed to be appointed for their knowledge of local persons and business. But these unpaid gentlemen would never spare the great amount of time required to go over innumerable cases, or to look at the result of accounts sent in, or replies to inquiries, instituted in their name and authority, by the inspector. In practice a few important cases, where the official desires a substantial increase of the previous assessment, are submitted. All the others, whether agreed, or altered, or increased, are legalized by the Commissioners' signature to the entire assessment of the district.

In the same way, the General Commissioners, similarly appointed and unpaid, whose duty it is to hear appeals and complaints, would require to give up not merely days but weeks if they were to hear and consider all the cases that could be brought before them. The result is that nearly all the cases are settled in the tax office, and it is there that exactions, back duty, fines and penalties are adjusted, all again in the name and authority of these Commissioners. The taxpayer knows how helpless he personally is against the weight and knowledge of the inspector; he does not wish any more daylight thrown on his intimate, private affairs, as it is such an easy matter for the official to pick holes in, and discredit, his return and accounts, and put him in the wrong. So he submits, and usually overpays.

I am, etc.,

"OLIM PUBLICANUS"

THE COAL CRISIS

SIR,—It may savour of impertinence for anyone entirely unconnected with the coal industry to put forward suggestions, but it is difficult for impartial observers to escape the conclusion that the recent debate in the House of Commons must make unsatisfactory reading for all those whose interest it is that this basic industry should recover its stability and

prosperity, whether they be owners, miners or taxpayers.

Nationalization, rationalization, Government purchase of royalties, amalgamations, a combined selling policy, pensions to retire the older workers, etc., are put forward as panaceas. None of them seems to go directly to the root of the matter, viz., the necessity of reducing costs in order to fight foreign competition and encourage home consumption while at the same time extracting as much profit as possible from each ton of coal produced, through the adoption of up-to-date scientific methods. Neither longer working hours nor a reduction in wages, nor any or all of the above-mentioned proposals will suffice to meet the situation.

As a result of the war, foreign competitors, especially France, Belgium, Germany and Holland, have been enabled to modernize their plant, machinery and methods, thanks to financial assistance which has been unavailable to the British coal industry. As Sir Alfred Mond has pointed out, "the position of the coal industry to-day is that it is extremely difficult for it to obtain finance from any quarter at all, and without capital improvements to reduce the cost of production cannot be made." Sir Alfred Mond might have added the words "and to increase the value of the industry's products." He went on to suggest the re-enactment of the Trade Facilities Act. For reasons that are doubtless sound, or perhaps insuperable at present, there seems no likelihood of effect being given to this suggestion. Would it not, however, be practicable to formulate a scheme which would enable the industry to find fresh capital on reasonable terms, provided that it undertook to give effect to certain recommendations as regards reorganization and improvements which have been put forward in the Samuel Report and elsewhere? Could not steps be taken analogous to those adopted abroad (in the case of industries whose maintenance and development are vital in the national interests), by giving a Treasury guarantee, as regards interest and sinking fund, in respect of an issue or issues of debentures by approved companies or groups of companies?

To the possible objection that such a policy would be revolutionary, and that it could not be confined to one industry, the answer would be that the extreme urgency of the problem demands exceptional treatment and that no other industry has the same claim to being a fundamentally basic one as the coal industry, while the good results to be expected from such a policy would undoubtedly have a beneficial effect on the great iron and steel industries.

Admittedly any such proposals would have to be very carefully thought out and put into practice. Every care would have to be exercised that the tax-payer's interests as guarantor were safeguarded, and the guarantee would only be granted in cases where companies or groups of companies undertook not only to utilize the proceeds of the resultant loans to the best possible purpose, but to adopt such a policy as regards improvements, working agreements, selling arrangements, research and other matters as in the opinion of a Commission, which would be set up to administer the scheme, would be desirable, having regard to the conditions in each case. If the objection were made that such a policy involved Government interference in industry, the answer would be that no scheme would be adopted until it had been fully discussed in principle and in detail and agreed with representatives of the industry and that the results would more than compensate for any disadvantages. Such a "Commission of Administration" would be composed of representatives of the industry, both owners and miners, and of Government nominees of high financial and industrial standing, to be mutually agreed upon.

Possibly the scheme could be worked on lines involving the division of the industry into districts or

groups by whom the guaranteed issue of debentures would be made, each district or group providing the necessary security co-operatively and dealing with the allocation of the proceeds of the loan through the medium of a Committee in each case, but the suggestion put forward is one of principle only. The manner of its application would have to be decided upon by those concerned.

I am, etc.,

H. UNDERDOWN

NELSON'S LETTERS

SIR,—Your reviewer does me an injustice when he infers that I have committed literary vandalism by "cutting" or "pruning down" the Nelson letters I have given in the recently published 'Life and Letters of Admiral Cornwallis.'

Out of a total of twelve, fourteen lines are omitted from *one only*: these give the names of the flag-officers, captains, and ships of Lord Howe's squadron in 1791—in my humble judgment of insufficient interest to print in a book (already lengthy) published 130 years later.

As regards the letters from the Rev. C. Wells, who I conclude is the "officer" your reviewer refers to, and who was Cornwallis's correspondent during the campaign against Tippoo Sahib in 1789-91, nothing has been "cut" from these which could be of the slightest use to students of the Military History of British India.

I am, etc.,

G. CORNWALLIS-WEST,

Shakenhurst Hall, Kidderminster

Major

ART

THE PRADO REVISITED

BY D. S. MACCOLL

IT is thirty-three years since I made the journey to Spain and Tangier. In two years short of a generation Progress has been busy in one and the other. Tangier under a rosy sunset revealed, against the dark skim-milk blue of the Arab town, large patches of buff-white, French, Spanish, English. One is not now carried ashore on the shoulders of Jews; but there are still painted fishing boats in the port. The old Souk, in which camels stood and fakirs with saws fixed in their head among the serpent-charmers and Arabian-Night singers, has been paved, and through it periodic earthquakes tear of cars and motor-bikes. The artist colony has gone so completely that it was difficult to find a tube of flake-white in the shops; the French have set up their government at Rabat, and there and at Fez that very great man, Marshal Lyautey, strictly planned their settlement to leave the Moorish quarter uncontaminated; the Spanish are at Tetouan, and what remains of the three nations muddles along in a jealous decay.

But the daedal of the Arab town remains, with its shops and schools and leather works fitted into the space of our dining-room tables, and donkeys tripping down the cobbles with their master atop of so towering a pile that he may imagine himself a camel-mounted sheik in the desert. And when the motley horde from the Monopole des Tabacs comes home at dusk along the beach it is like the Children of Israel on the march.

Progress has been more complete in parts of Spain. The old, rather Quixotish inns have had central heating installed and hot and cold water pipes in the bedrooms. The apparatus usually does not work, but it is pointed to with reasonable pride and accounted for in the bill. Madrid, never a very inhabitable town, is the perfect traffic-throttle we are all coming to; trams have been laid down not only in the few wide

thoroughfares, but thrust into streets whose width remains that of Moorish *calles*. Against their jangling the motor-cars hoot or squeal each of them all the time, ineffectually, for the pleasure of the noise. A throng of people steps on or off the scrap of footway; it is possible to walk, or rather to ooze, only in single file through the bawling sellers and the buyers of lottery tickets. Spain has still vast countrysides and many towns of quiet, but I found it in my heart at Poitiers to regret that Charles the Hammer had begun the turning back of the Saracen sleep. There the congestion was trifling compared with Madrid's; and from a dark and tram-infested street I stumbled through the wicket in a high grill with the blazon of the De Blossacs upon it into the spacious eighteenth century; avenues of secular trees and a plunge into "the vast abrupt," moon-muffled.

Such is the passage from the inferno of Madrid into the heaven of the Prado. Here also there has been change in the interval, but towards a greater nobility of order. The director was completing the hanging of his Goyas at the end of the long Spanish gallery which begins with the Primitives. Half-way down this march of a great history opens, at right angles, the Velazquez Hall, short of it that of El Greco, and on the hither and farther side of these and bisecting the Velazquez centre a parallel track runs through the rich continents of Italian and Flemish painting.

What a collection! Suppose that the unequalled Venetian treasure of Charles I, a fraction of which still enriches Hampton Court, had remained unpillaged; that instead of Van Dyck, a still greater native had been heir to Titian and Rubens; that Reynolds and Gainsborough had regularly served the Court, and that the stars of Lawrence had been just so little disjuncted as to make him a Goya, then England would have had the like. The Prado gains even by its omissions. It all but ignores Rembrandt himself, and can afford it; but it has not the inordinate quantity of small Dutch painting that accumulates where "gaps" are dreaded. It has the character of a royal taste and choice; some oddities and superstitions no doubt; less of the early morning than of full noontide and afternoon; but what a proud summer of these!

The new mansion in this paradise is Goya's. The tapestry designs remain downstairs and the wall paintings from his house in a more tremendous vein have been added since my time, but in the rotunda that ends the long gallery are grouped his portraits, including the famous 'Majas,' dressed and nude, that used to be in the academy of San Fernando, as well as pictures like the 'Dos Mayo,' father of Manet. I have spoken of Lawrence as Goya's nearest drawing and painting affinity in England; but this Spaniard had a Hogarth and a Gainsborough tugging within him for his affection and breaking out, now one, now the other, with a sharper malice of grace or brutality; he had also his own demon of design. All that is displayed, but this exhibition confirms as well an old reserve about much of Goya's painting. The portraits, and the 'Majas' even, are brilliant at short range; at a greater distance the light goes out. This arises, probably, from the practice of painting on a strong reddish ground. Nothing is so seductive as the effect of the first painting on a coloured preparation, and if a strictly relative chord is maintained the result will still be delightful: but if the ground in the end is to be "killed" the slightest initial colour becomes a handicap. Beside Velazquez, the untarnished absolute of flesh painting in an 'El Primo,' Goya is relative and dulled. The drawings I had no time to enjoy.

Paradise, if in general plan and most of its hanging immensely bettered, is still capable of minor improvements. Symmetry, a necessity for the comfort of the eye, is not attained in the Velazquez Hall. Considerations of lighting may perhaps be the cause, but the 'Meninas,' which as an upright calls for a centre, with the 'Hilanderas' and 'Breda' right and left,

hangs to one side. These, with the Philosophers and Dwarfs and some of the royal portraits, are so quintessential that it is a pity to drop down from their level to the 'Apollo at the Forge,' or even the 'Borrachos' in the same room. They, along with Velazquez's unlucky religious pieces, might be grouped in the long gallery with the historical series, or in some other room. The Greco room is awkwardly cut about, and the painter not in his full strength.

Shall I seem to be searching for sun-spots if I add that I wish the 'Gloria' of Titian were back in the Escorial, instead of taking the centre opposite the great equestrian 'Charles V'? This picture, of which a smaller version was recently acquired for our National Gallery, is a task-work in which Titian attempted an insoluble problem. The Trinity is a thoroughly bad subject pictorially. If, as dogma requires, equal importance be given to the Father and Son, the result is a duality which the trifling symbol of the Holy Ghost is incapable of resolving. But they, too, become insignificant when thrown back to the far end of a deep perspective avenue. The next important figure in the drama, the Emperor, could not, without a breach of etiquette, be rendered by a back-view; he had to become a side-show. Titian revenged himself as he might with large patriarchs picturesquely cocking their legs in the foreground, or waving badges of their identity; but he must have been bored with the whole performance, and you see him trying to distribute his blue with the help of the Virgin's awkward figure. Alongside is the picture that should have the centre, the greatest of his 'Entombments.' In two subtly compounded waves of form his crimson and blue and dark ivories of flesh and grey of stone marry, and close, with a sombre masterpiece, the story that began with the gay riots of amorini and Bacchanals that once hung alongside of our 'Ariadne' in the Castello of Alfonso at Ferrara.

THE THEATRE

ALL SORTS FOR CHRISTMAS

BY IVOR BROWN

PLACE of honour should go, I suppose, to Pantomime; unfortunately I have not yet had the opportunity to call upon Prince Charming or mingle with that group of noble dames whom Christmas still reassembles. So, in default of royalty, we must make a start with the king's first commoner. Mr. Robey, now at the Prince's Theatre in a revue called 'Bits and Pieces,' has long been billed as the Prime Minister of Mirth. The title is just in its attribution of command, but all too gentle in its emphasis. Say rather the Mussolini of Mirth, since George has but to raise an eyebrow and we are his. On this occasion he has the skilful and simultaneous antics of the Hippodrome Girls and some capable singers to fill the intervals between his appearances; supernumeraries he must have since nobody, save the unparagoned Ruth Draper, can be a whole theatre for two and a half hours on end; but allies he scarcely needs. When he is entertaining, he is a host in himself.

What a tribute to the art of the music-hall is Mr. Robey's instantaneous and irresistible authority! Surely there has never been a more terrible and triumphant discipline for droll and singer than that provided by the vaudeville of twenty years ago. Consider the smoke, the restlessness, the rattle of glasses, the *brouhaha* of the Promenade against which one lonely figure had to pit his personality; there was no time to be lost; he had to dominate immediately and to dominate in solitude. In modern musical shows

the principals are enormously helped (possibly they have to be helped) by the mass-attack of a Prussianized chorus and by the "plugging" of a popular tune until what was once an air has become a recurrent cyclone. The music-hall men, facing the multitude with no such massive and multitudinous supports, had to conquer by self-reliance. Furthermore, they had to conquer at once; to hesitate or to fumble was disastrous. The traditional rapidity of attack remains in Mr. Robey, whose dominion does not dwindle. The tradition made for a certain stiffness; the performer had to fling his personality violently at the audience and such a missile must be rigid, not plastic. Revue demands plasticity and great masters of revue have convertible personalities. Mr. Robey's revue is really a turn with intervals. That is right, since Mr. Robey's humour suffers no disguises. On this occasion he has some good and some indifferent matter, but the method triumphs in a dazzling way. I repeat that Mr. Robey's command of an audience is unique in our theatre and anyone who is interested in the technique of the stage must be ravished by an authority so absolute.

In the old days the sparks emitted by the igneous rock which is Robey did not all fly upward—as County Councillors would understand that word. The humour now is more domesticated. But there is the old, superb, bridling, leering, collarless, clerical, incorrigible who puts the responsibility for any misunderstanding upon the hearty laughter in the stalls. The absurd figure under the pudding-basin hat and the monstrous brows once more restates his query. Has he come from a vestry where the curate tipples or from a jug-and-bottle department where frock coats are compulsory? Well, there he is again. As a blushing bride, as one of the Pharaohs, as a seller and consumer of whelks, he is a great droll; as himself he is something better.

Who is Silvia? The question is easily answered. She is Mr. Ervine's 'Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary,' redressed with taste by Mr. James Dyrenforth, and acted with a delicious sense of style by Miss Iris Hoey, who can teach most of our musical comedy ladies their business. You will find 'Silvia' at the Vaudeville and you will also find that, under discreet guidance, musical comedy can conduct itself in a very mannerly and pleasant way. To do this it must remain comedy and there is quite enough of Mr. Ervine's satire on theatrical vulgarity to give the book distinction. The vocal powers of the cast were not remarkable on the first night, but they have, I understand, been increased. Mr. Ivor Barnard and Mr. Ernest Thesiger prove again what very good comedians they can be and Miss Margaret Yarde appears as a patrol-leader of the Girl Guides. The performance is, as they say, immense, the lady being as imperial as an Australian Burgundy and as beneficent as Mr. Drage.

"Straight plays" for the Christmas season include 'Whispering Wires' (the Apollo) and 'Quest' (the Criterion). The former is crook-stuff of a moderate competence. We are accustomed to be surprised by what goes on in New York, but we can still be astonished to discover that after the mysterious death of a threatened millionaire a private detective can keep the police and Press off the premises while he tackles the job itself. We are less likely to be astonished by the solution of the puzzle, which is obvious after the first act. Mr. James Carew is very much the bully boy and Miss Edyth Goodall is queerly human amid this mechanical farrago of crime and punishment. In 'Quest' Mr. Ralph Stock introduces us to a seemingly invertebrate peer who leaves home in order to find himself. He goes to sea in his yacht along with a barmaid and a boxer; when in trouble with the angry deep the boxer behaves like a fool and the peer like a hero and a mariner. Having knocked out the boxer with a belying-pin or some such nautical knuckle-duster he comes home and marries the boxer's barmaid, to the boxer's great satisfaction. Of the peer's quest in search of his soul we can only say that he

might have gone less far and fared far better; he seemed to take a deal of trouble about nothing in particular. However, being played by Mr. Hugh Wakefield he yields some fun, while the boxer and barmaid are done with spirit by Mr. Fred Groves and Miss Heather Thatcher.

Miss Jean Forbes-Robertson's appearance as Peter Pan (at the Gaiety) reclaims that rôle from the hearty and the pretty styles of playing it. This actress has the quality of strangeness. Her Peter comes from no earthly nursery, but about the dark and elvish figure there is nothing of the mawkish fairy. In fact you wonder why this darting sprite should bother his head about Wendy or ever have tried to return to mother. The black pine-woods and blacker skies of night are his spiritual aerodrome. I think that Miss Forbes-Robertson makes Peter more tolerable than the author either intended or deserved. Miss Mary Casson's Wendy is a figure of common sense, too prudent for never-never lands and very nicely free from the lushness to which the part must tempt the elderly player. Miss Casson, like her mother Sybil Thorndike, can act with containment and does not overflow. Altogether this is a good Pan Christmas and to those who are doubtful whether to amuse the children by Hook or by crook, I can recommend the former though I am confident that most children prefer police to pixies and earthy desperadoes to Barrie's aerial boggarts.

Miss Jean Stirling Mackinlay is clever enough to make nursery rhymes safe for the nursery. Her Christmas entertainment (Rupert Steiner Hall) is the usual gracious mixture of old fun and new. Dr. Doolittle supplies the latter with a full equipment of animal life. His bestiary is a nice novelty amid the routine of Christmas catering. Add tea with the Mad Hatter and songs which are sung as though they were meant to please instead of to impress and the result is something which the high-brow cannot despise and the low-brow can really enjoy. For *Altifrons* I can also recommend Dr. Geyl's version from the Dutch of Christian Europe's first purely secular play 'Lancelot of Denmark.' This is to be seen at Playroom Six (along with a charade by Mr. Geoffrey Dearmer) and is made into a very attractive spectacle in the early Dutch manner. The play is something more than a collector's piece; here is romance in its childhood and that is something far preferable to romance in its dotage.

LITERARY COMPETITIONS—96

SET BY IVOR BROWN

A. *We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for a translation into English heroic couplets in the eighteenth-century manner of the following distressing narrative from Alabama:*

Mrs. Lamar Bustin is confined to her bed suffering from the effects of a most unusual accident, that of being bitten by a catfish, while a member of a fishing party on the Tombigbee river. A 40-pound catfish had been landed by the party and had been placed in a small pool of water until the members were ready to return to their home. In a playful manner Mrs. Bustin's husband picked her up in his arms and threw her into the pool, her foot entering the mouth of the fish. Its sharp teeth badly cut the foot. At first it was feared the bite would result seriously, but reports from the home are that she is improving.

B. *The 'American Mercury' quotes the following announcement made to its readers by the 'Altoona (Kansas) Tribune':*

Ten cents straight will be charged for all obituary notices to all business men who do not advertise while living. Delinquent subscribers will be charged fifteen cents per line for an obituary notice. Advertisers and cash subscribers will receive as good a send-off as we are capable of writing, without any charge whatever. Better send in your subscription, as the hog cholera is abroad in the land.

We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the Best Send-Off of a lavish and leading advertiser who has fallen a victim to the plague mentioned. The dirge, which should be written in American prose, should not exceed 250 words.

RULES

- i. All envelopes must be marked LITERARY, followed by the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and addressed to the Editor, The SATURDAY REVIEW, 9 King Street, London, W.C.2 (e.g., this week, LITERARY 96A, or LITERARY 96a).
- ii. Typescript is not essential, provided the writing is legible, but competitors must use one side of the paper only. Pen-names may be employed if desired.
- iii. Where a word limit is set, every fifty words must be marked off by competitors on their MSS.
- iv. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves to himself the right to print in part or in whole any matter sent in for competition, whether successful or not. MSS. cannot be returned. Competitors failing to comply with any of these rules will be disqualified. Should the entries submitted be adjudged undeserving of award the Editor reserves the right to withhold a prize or prizes.

Entries must reach the Editor, addressed according to the rules, not later than by the first post on Monday, January 9, 1928. The results will be announced in the issue of the SATURDAY REVIEW for January 14. Neither the Editor nor the setter of the Competitions can enter into any correspondence with competitors.

RESULTS OF COMPETITIONS 94

SET BY PETER TRAILL

A. *The following appeared in a recent "agony": "To D. LOVE MEANT, final, rather than endure your contempt, seven years ago in car outside residence." We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for an expansion and elucidation, in the form of a letter from the man to D. The letter should not exceed 250 words in length.*

B. *We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for a poem, in not more than sixteen lines, in praise of the Waratahs, who will meet England on January 7, having already beaten Ireland and Wales.*

We have received the following report from Mr. Peter Traill, with which we concur, and we have pleasure in awarding the prizes in accordance with his recommendations.

REPORT FROM MR. TRAILL

94A. The people who use the agony column as a medium for communication are apparently more ingenious than I had supposed them to be, judging from the attempts made to solve this competition. The solutions submitted were of a very low standard, and it seemed to me that the effect of Christmas must have been severe in the homes of the readers of the SATURDAY REVIEW. J. Hughes sends in a letter in the broadest cockney which is surely not in sympathy with the "agony"; John Galpin addresses the letter to a man called "Tod" and Elspeth Ryan to one named "David"—I should have thought that "D" was a woman whose name began with D, but evidently life is becoming as complex as the sex-writers would have us believe. Pibwob was seasonable but little else, and Athos and Five Winds too imaginative. In my opinion Doris Elles submitted the best attempt, though I think the matter to be simpler than that. G. M. Graham's was the best of the others, and accordingly I recommend these two for the first and second prizes respectively.

FIRST PRIZE

To D.

Since I have known you—a longer time than you could suppose—you have not suffered injustice, loved without being loved or been at all despised by anyone.

These things that happened to me seem important still sometimes though it is nearly seven years since we were first aware of one another.

Were you aware of me to-day I wonder? Presumably not since you have never even noticed the annual "agony" message on which I have wasted six little lump sums. I have driven past forty-three quite often lately and to-day you were going away. The newest man isn't much to look at is he? But he tucked the rug in just the way you like it. It was exactly the same kind of rug too as that old one. I couldn't see the D and the bunch of violets in the corner but I expect they were there. How can you go on strewing violets about in that silly, affected way? Isn't it tempting a man to steal things that don't belong to him? Well I advise you not to accuse this new chap of looking for money. He might not be so quiet as I was.

This is the last of my "messages," and before you come back I shall be on another rank. I can't attend to business while I'm on this one, though driving a taxi isn't so bad you know. Better in many ways than being only

THE CHAUFFEUR.

DORIS ELLES

SECOND PRIZE

My Dear Doris,

I cannot let you go without making one final appeal to you. The brooch was a token of love. It was meant to represent one of Cupid's darts. It had nothing whatever to do with broad arrows. I didn't even know about your father. I honestly thought you were an orphan.

If I were capable of such thoughts, I should deserve your contempt. But I do not deserve it, and I cannot endure it. I would rather try to forget that you ever made me love you.

It is my misfortune always to be misunderstood. It was the same with Aunt Julia, when my car stuck half-way up a hill, and I said that, if she hadn't been there, I'd have got out and shoved. I meant her to think that I couldn't tear myself away from her; but of course she took it the wrong way, and when we stopped outside her residence, she flounced out, all twelve stone of her, and left me without a word. That was seven years ago; and, as you know, we haven't spoken since. And she's so rich! That is the sort of thing that happens to me.

And now history has repeated itself.

So, you see, I really deserve pity, and not contempt.

But I don't want your pity. I only want your love.

Yours,

BILL

G. M. GRAHAM

94B. Since I set this competition the Waratahs have been narrowly beaten by Scotland, so that the coming match has lost a little of its importance in the Rugby football world. The defeat by Scotland has probably disheartened the Waratahs a little, but I venture to think that the welcomes addressed to them by the competitors would, if they were all printed, cause them not only to lose all heart but probably to decline to play England at all. The attempts were so poor that I do not think that a first prize should be awarded; for the second I recommend J. L. MacCallum's—primarily because, as it is Christmas time, I am feeling charitable, and secondly because the Waratahs (who come, by the way, from New South Wales and not New Zealand as some appear to think) may not be able to appreciate its deficiencies owing to its dialect.

SECOND PRIZE

Fair fa your honest faces, buirdly chieils
Wha frae your hames aneath the Southern Cross
Hae socht your aulder hame tae risk a toss
Wi Britain's Rugby lads. Tae coup their creels
You've wrocht fu weel—nor Pat nor Davy squeals
We ken for sure; for ilk ane bears his loss
Wi manly speerit, kennin gold frae dross
An for their fame they focht like very deils!

Syne, gallant sirs, tae Murrayfield ye cam
An Sandy's mettle fand fell teuch an dour
Ye played the game, sirs a, wi skeel an grit
Sae tae your healths ilk Scot taks aff his dram—
Sune English Jockie tae maun dae his bit;
May glorious fitba' fill the croodit oor!

J. L. MACCALLUM

NEW 'BACK NUMBERS'—IV

FROM 1927, for a period which to some contemporary readers may have seemed too long, the SATURDAY REVIEW contained a series of articles by Stet—the model on which the present short series has been framed. The identity of Stet was one of the minor literary mysteries of the epoch, but need not now concern anyone. Suffice it to say that he was a man who had read a good deal, but who satisfied not one of the requirements we make of the critic. On the one hand, he was without the smallest academic authority, had not a single friend among professors, and indeed, after rediscovering, in his casual way, a small, forgotten masterpiece, had been convicted by a not more than ordinarily dreary professor of a misprint in his reproduction of it. On the other hand, he, in the classic American phrase, "cut no ice" with the general public, which, in fact, very seldom heard of him. He took literature as he took claret, without much respect for the official classification, and at the same time without the indiscriminate appreciation which distinguishes truly hearty persons. He disliked almost everything which gave pleasure to his fellows: wireless, greyhound racing, all sports except riding and shooting, acrostics, agnostic bishops and journalistic deans, serious pornography, free verse, the theory that the Americans are our cousins, cross-word problems, intellectual women, social uplifters, democracy, boiled cabbage, the writings of Michael Arlen, hostesses who invited authors to dinner and gave them Empire "Burgundy" in flagons, and so forth.

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But it is unnecessary further to disclose his frailties. Stet, the poor penman, has been dead these many years; beat not the bones of the buried, sweet critics; while he breathed he was a man. Take him all in all, a man whose like, God helping, we shall not see again. The point here is simply that round about 1927 he reviewed in the SATURDAY the opinions expressed by his predecessors thirty, forty and fifty years earlier, and found them on the whole worthy to stand. A consideration of one or two of the many matters in which he has become out of date may serve some purpose.

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Perhaps the chief of his errors was the belief that the material of literature is of no more æsthetic value than the colours or the clay with which artists in other departments work. We are all wiser now. We know that mere facts are of immense value to the artist. Facts, as we now understand, have their value intrinsically, and independently of the pattern into which the artist, if he be old-fashioned enough, works them. Thus murder and adultery are strong facts, and a novel rich in murder and adultery will of necessity be a strong novel. All sudden, ugly, disordered things are strong, and their use in literature automatically results in strength. The notion common to Shakespeare and Stet as a letter is common to Macedon and Monmouth, that the action of beauty may be "no stronger than a flower" has long since been discredited. And we have no sort of use for a pattern. Creation, in Genesis, was the evocation of order out of what was without form and void; but by no reasonable stretch of language can Genesis be called a modern book, and our present idea of creation is the decomposition of order into chaos.

Thus, in a work of fiction, we very properly demand not the coherent ideas and decisive emotions of the characters, but the welter of half-formed, contradictory and transient thoughts as they rise out of the subconscious and lapse back into it, and the confused, ephemeral impulses of the novelist's creatures. The origin of our great modern literary movement cannot be confidently set down, but it seems probable that it began with the early Georgian advertisement, "Whenever you see a pillar-box, think of a fountain-pen." Urged by this exhortation, the potential writers of the next period, whenever they saw A, thought of B, so that the emotions of a man contemplating, say, the Alps would be subtly conveyed by a minute description of institutions so, on the surface, far removed from them as the public conveniences of Paris. As regards poetry, the main discovery was made earlier, but its exploitation came later, when the epithet having already been eliminated, the verb was abolished, and poems, truly modern in spirit, began to be simply catalogues of unconditioned facts. Like many great discoveries, this had been half-anticipated by a writer who missed his opportunity, by the author of "ships and shoes and sealing-wax and cabbages and kings." But the spirit of that poem, like its technique, was after all old-world, and the revolution was post-Georgian.

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Returning to the errors of Stet, another of his follies was to assume that in considering the religious, political, social or other doctrines of an artist in literature we should ask, not what value those doctrines had for us, but what value they had for the artist. According to the old view of this matter, if a certain doctrine, be it old or new, sound or unsound, excited an artist to the most vivid exercise of his characteristic powers, then, simply for that reason, it was valuable. But it is demonstrably absurd to allow any merit to a doctrine which is out of date. Modern writers must have modern doctrines; otherwise they themselves are not modern; and if they are not modern they are of no account, are in the worst sense mere back numbers. Progress being, by its very nature, movement forward, a writer who harks back to some old doctrine is going against the whole world-movement. Fortunately, it is now almost impossible for a reactionary to do anything. The co-operative literature of our time, in the final shaping of which the printer is encouraged to play a bold part, and to which the reader is expected to contribute virtually all the brains, is utterly hostile to the ridiculous individualism of earlier epochs.

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Finally, it may be noticed in Stet—not that he matters except in so far as he speaks for a late Victorian clique—that he supposed the older literature of England and of France to be central. But we, to a man, would say that the true literary centre is to be found in the Slav world. It is in a twilight of indecision, in a never quite begun struggle between irrational desires and irrational inhibitions, that the soul of man comes into its kingdom. The old epical conceptions have no validity now. To Balzac it seemed that a contemporary French peasant or grocer or notary might experience in the highest degree the passions which raised and ruined the persons of Greek or Shakespearean tragedy, and he rejoiced mightily in the spectacle of men and women wholly abandoned to a ruling passion, the noblest or the basest. But the novel of Balzac is for us a sort of sublime absurdity.

STET II.

'Back Numbers' in its usual form will be resumed next week.

REVIEWS

AMERICAN HISTORY

BY EDWARD SHANKS

The Oxford History of the United States, 1783-1917. By S. E. Morison. Milford. Oxford University Press. 2 vols. 32s.

IT is our fault now if we, the interested and educated inhabitants of England, do not make ourselves fully acquainted with the history of the United States, and I have frequently argued in these pages that it is of the utmost importance that we should thus furnish our minds. The focus of world history is now in America, where it is affected by all manner of local accidents which we must understand if we are to understand its present and probable future course. Historical events have a way of outliving their intrinsic importance and conditioning subsequent events at times and in places not dreamt of by the original actors in them. Who shall say how far Woodrow Wilson at Versailles was not influenced, one way or another, by the ghosts of his great predecessors standing at his shoulders, how far, for example, the old Democratic and Southern conception of state-rights unconsciously affected the form he gave to the doctrine of self-determination and the hopes he entertained for the League of Nations?

It will be our fault, I say, if we do not possess ourselves of the facts which would enable us at any rate to canvass such questions. Hard on the admirable 'Rise of American Civilization,' by Mr. and Mrs. Beard, comes this also admirable work by the late Harmsworth Professor of American History at Oxford. The two books are, in a sense, complementary. Both taken together will give the English inquirer a very sound basis not only of information but also of interpretation from different points of view, which he can, if he likes, interpret again from his own point of view. The two books therefore call in the first instance for a certain measure of comparison which is not difficult to supply. 'The Rise of American Civilization' is rather an essay on historical processes than a formal historical narrative. It was written, also, rather for the American than for the English reader. Professor Morison supplies us now with the formal narrative, which, as he tells us in his preface, "was written during my tenure of the chair of American History at Oxford and in the hope of interesting British readers to the history of the United States."

It is a good book and, since it is a good book, let us begin our consideration of it with some adverse criticisms. Professor Morison starts his record with the year 1783, with the conditions obtaining after Great Britain had recognized the independence of the revolting colonies. He undoubtedly avoids by this several serious difficulties, including the likelihood of a dispute with the Mayor of Chicago. But I see no other reason for his beginning where he does. And is it the business of an historian to avoid difficulties? He might avoid the whole row of them by writing no book at all. Here we are pitchforked into the middle of a situation without any details of the manner in which it arose. We are not told (and it is an important point) how the colonies were divided between an enthusiastic minority and a small majority which, if mere inertia and incredulity of change could have produced any such result, would have maintained the *status quo*. The point is important for two reasons. If the colonists had been unanimous from the beginning in their desire for separation, there would have been much less Anglophobia after separation was achieved and the history of the relations between the two peoples, consequently the history of the world, would have been different. We have to ask ourselves, further, what would have been

the course followed in the development of the American continent if the Revolution had failed or had never been attempted. This is not merely a speculative question, since it leads to suggestive thoughts on the past and future of Canada and Australia. Here Professor Morison does give us a decided and illuminating opinion:

The public land system of Canada, which Lord Durham found "the most mischievous practical cause of dissension" in that colony, is a fair measure of what the American pioneer would have had imposed upon him if the War of Independence had turned out differently. In order to foster loyalty on the basis of privilege, and check the American tendency to "wild democracy," Lord Dorchester produced a bureaucratic travesty of the New England township system, with extensive crown and clergy reserves, and enormous free grants to loyalists and officials. During the administration of one Canadian governor, almost a million and a half acres were granted to sixty individuals; yet would-be settlers found it almost impossible to obtain land at a reasonable price.

That short passage is pregnant with matter for meditation. But I do not think that meditation on it can be profitably carried on without far more information about America before and during the revolution than Professor Morison gives us.

My second stricture concerns a lack of proportion. Professor Morison has 935 pages in which to cover a period of a hundred and thirty-four years and he gives the first third of his space to less than a quarter of his period. His object is, I think, discernible and defensible. He wishes to make plain to English readers, who know little of it, the early history of the Republic and its relations with Great Britain. But as a result his narrative becomes uncomfortably huddled when it reaches years of which we think we know more and actually know less. He accentuates this difficulty by giving too much room to the military events of the Civil War—though it must be said, in common justice, that his narrative here is a brilliant model of perspicuity. The period that suffers most from this undue attention to others is that immediately succeeding the Civil War, where for a time Professor Morison becomes vague and elusive.

It is high time, however, to turn to the great merits of Professor Morison's work, which far outweigh those points in which I have ventured to suggest defects. He seems to me considerably to excel the Beards in the manner in which he brings out the part played by the "frontier" in the moulding of the United States. His treatment of Anglo-American relations is throughout almost beyond praise for its impartiality and good temper. When he has to compress a huge phase of American history into a few pages, as in his account of the growth of railway communications and their effect on politics and on the settlement of the country, he shows unsurpassed gifts for brief and extensive survey. Finally, his narrative of the career of Theodore Roosevelt is perhaps the most discerning and suggestive study yet written of that not quite explicable but very symptomatic man.

The English reader should undoubtedly study the work of the Beards as well as this, but this will provide him with the solid and indispensable framework on which to arrange further information and further speculation.

The best I can say of the maps with which these two volumes are provided is that they are better than no maps at all.

PITT AND WELLINGTON

The Personal History of Walmer Castle and its Lords Warden. By the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston. Macmillan. 28s.

IN pursuance of the precedent set in the case of Lord Dalhousie, the Lord Wardenship of the Cinque Ports was conferred on Lord Curzon in 1905 after his return from governing India. His brief tenure of office was fraught with unhappy memories,

since we now learn that the fatal illness of Lady Curzon was attributed by her husband to defects in the sanitation of Walmer Castle, the official residence which had stood unoccupied for some years. But though Lord Curzon could not bear to stay on there, he had formed an affection for the quaint old building with its numerous historical associations, and had begun to collect materials for an account of his predecessors. He continued to work on this at intervals during the remainder of his life, and left the narrative almost complete from the installation of the magnificent Duke of Dorset in 1709 to the death of the Duke of Wellington in 1852. The very interesting chapter dealing with this most famous of all Lords Warden, indeed, had not received Lord Curzon's final revision, and it has been admirably edited from his rough manuscript by Mr. Stephen Gwynn, who has also utilized Lord Curzon's notes for a succinct account of the later Lords Warden.

This very entertaining volume reveals Lord Curzon's many-sided ability in a new light and shows that if he had not been more strongly drawn to the study of the practical problems of Empire he might have made a distinguished figure among English biographers. A number of excellent illustrations, from old engravings and modern photographs, adds value to the work; there seems, however, to be an error in the caption of the picture representing "the three castles of the Cinque Ports." The long chapter on Pitt, who was Lord Warden from 1792 to 1806, draws a delightfully human sketch of that statesman in his social hour. Lord Curzon has selected his material with much skill both from unpublished documents and from printed but well-nigh forgotten books; who reads Tomline to-day? We are forcibly reminded of that "Slender Billy" who

took a cake and a raspberry jam
When he heard they had taken Seringapatam.

There is a charming series of extracts from Nelson's letters, when he was stationed in the Downs and kept wondering to his Emma whether he should call on "Billy Pitt" out of respect for a great man, "though he never did anything for me or my relations. . . . He may perhaps be useful to me one day or other." Pitt was then only "a watchman on the lonely tower," but he was destined once again to launch "that thunderbolt of war." Lord Curzon explains that Nelson hated his Channel command and was always seasick, which may help to explain his seeming ingratitude. While Pitt was resident at Walmer he took a keen interest in the local defence of the coast for which, as Lord Warden, he was responsible. Lord Curzon gives a very amusing account of his energetic handling of the available forces, though we must agree in finding it difficult to swallow Lady Hester Stanhope's assurance that she was to command "the famous 15th Light Dragoons" in case of invasion. Pitt's kindness to his wayward niece, remarkable as it was, can hardly have gone to that length.

We are apt to think of Pitt as unapproachable and of Wellington as a stern martinet, but Lord Curzon's book reminds us that both views are incomplete. Pitt's haughty reserve before the world is shown as "replaced by a charming and unaffected familiarity at home," and the Iron Duke melted in the presence of birds and children. One visitor to Walmer noticed in what numbers the redbreast loved to build and warble there, whereupon the housekeeper informed him "that the Duke evinced a great fondness for the little birds, and that the people at the Castle, knowing this, gave every encouragement to the colonization of the robins in the grounds." Some of Lord Curzon's pleasantest pages describe Wellington's unbending with the children whom he loved to have about him; before dinner he was always ready to take part in a representation of the Battle of Waterloo, "which commenced by one of the children

throwing a cushion at the newspaper the Duke was reading." On the steamer from Deal to London a passenger came up to Lord de Ros and warned him that his little girl was given to romancing; "she has just told me that this morning she had a pillow fight with the Duke of Wellington." "My dear sir," said Lord de Ros, "that is absolutely true. One small boy thought it a lark to slop tea over the conqueror of Napoleon; another, when the house-keeper refused jam, said, 'Let's go to the Duke—anyone can get what they like from him.' Mean-time Haydon was admiring his eminent sitter as 'an eagle of the gods who had put on human shape.' It all depends on the point of view, and we prefer that of Lord Curzon.

THE UGLY DUCKLING

Hans Andersen the Man. By Elith Reumert.
Translated from the Danish by Jessie
Brochner. Methuen. 10s. 6d.

"LEAVE him alone," said the mother duck, referring to the tall, ungainly bird which she had just hatched out so unexpectedly; "he did no harm to anyone." And the same words might well be addressed to that small group of Danish critics who were so persistently hostile to Hans Andersen in his lifetime, and have done their best to belittle his memory since his death. Andersen's personal peculiarities, his lanky, loose-limbed body, his beak of a nose, and, above all, his painfully sensitive soul, formed, no doubt, a tempting subject for satire among his own countrymen. As Mr. Reumert says, "he was like the ugly duckling, and was in consequence ridiculed." But the world, outside the duck-pond, sees only the swan in him, and would never even have heard of these other ill-natured birds if Mr. Reumert had not thought it necessary to answer their cackling.

He does so very effectively. Hans Andersen, as he appears in these pages, is just a big, awkward, overgrown, self-conscious child, aware of his own clumsiness, ashamed of his humble origin, nervously anxious to be liked, desperately lonely, vainly offering his heart to one pretty woman after another (until Jenny Lind shattered his last hope), worrying about his health and his ruined nervous system, lying awake at night wondering what posterity would think of him—in fact, a rather pathetic but entirely convincing psychological study. There is no reason to doubt its accuracy: we have Andersen's own diary and correspondence (he was an indefatigable letter-writer) and the unconscious evidence of his 'Story of My Life.' All support Mr. Reumert's view.

Yet these Danish critics have twisted nervousness into ill-temper, loneliness into misanthropy or snobbishness, reserve into vanity, and have ended by denying to Andersen even his most obvious virtue—his love of children! It appears that he objected to sculptured groups of children being added to his monument. Of course he did—for he always maintained that his fairy tales would be read more by grown-ups than by little ones, and he was probably right. In fact, he loved and understood children as few men have. He was called vain, because he was, as he said himself, "an old bachelor with a young heart." He longed for a home of his own. But there was nothing either vain or ridiculous about his love-making. Mr. Reumert's account of that heart-rending affair with Jenny Lind only leaves one wondering which of the two was the more lovable personality. Here is one of the entries in Andersen's diary of that time:

The sculptor who in London made a bust of Jenny has made one of me as a companion bust, and it is like, exceedingly like me, but so ennobled, so beautiful! My God, if only I looked like that! My face will be like that in a better world!

In the meantime, Jenny Lind, as everyone knows, married a Mr. Goldschmidt.

Hans Andersen has been called a snob because he was the friend of kings and princes; but it is doubtful if his critics would have refused such friendships if they had come their way, and if Andersen liked a princess all the better because she *was* a princess, that was a very human and boyish weakness in him. The truth is that little princesses liked Andersen. Some of them were Germans, and on this fact was founded another stupid, unjust charge—that of lack of patriotism.

But Mr. Reumert is really flogging dead donkeys. Andersen himself once remarked to William Bloch that he "would rather like to have a peep-hole in his coffin, from which he could observe how his funeral would turn out, who would follow, and what would be said about him." He need not have worried—though it was characteristic of him to do so. Once when he went to call upon Grimm, he was humiliated to discover that the latter had never even heard of him! It would be hard to find anyone who had not heard of Hans Andersen to-day. Only his sufferings, his ugliness—a singularly attractive kind of ugliness, if we may judge from Mr. Reumert's illustrations—and his personal eccentricities are forgotten. And if, as Mr. Reumert suggests, he is now "looking down upon his old globe from the star where he imagined he might be born afresh and become a still greater poet," it may comfort him to see how the world still loves the ugly duckling and would not have it changed.

TWO WORLDS

Man and the Supernatural. By Evelyn Underhill. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

THE recent controversy about Gorilla Sermons has surely missed the real point. Admitted (as every sane man must admit) that Christianity is not committed to an antiquated "special creation" theory, and that the evolutionary hypothesis threatens no essential religious interest, it still remains that contemporary biology menaces the Christian position at a far more vital point in the line than its defenders seem to have realized. They have been diverted by an absurd side-show. But the weight of the intellectual offensive falls on the centre, the very core and heart of all that religion stands to preserve—the concept of the Supernatural. The whole tendency of current thought is towards an evolutionary monism, in which the traditional religious symbolism of Reality as subsisting in two planes—the Natural and the Supernatural—can only maintain itself precariously. "My position," said Dr. Lloyd Morgan in his well known Gifford lectures, "is monistic to the core." "We must be monists and take the consequences," says an Anglican preacher, Canon Charles Raven. And the extreme statement of this attitude is provided by Prof. Alexander, who wrote (in a phrase that has now become familiar) that "Deity is the next empirical quality to Mind which the Universe is engaged in bringing about." God is thus immersed in succession, is indeed in process of being manufactured; and we are left with the picture of a Universe in which there may be Deity to-morrow but never Deity to-day. However much religious phraseology may be retained by such an interpretation it is really destructive of genuine religion, which must essentially have for its object the Perfect, Unconditioned and Unchanging, the Source and Ground of successive, finite experience. It seems that von Hügel was right in his warning that the most insidious enemy of religion is "any and every form of monism."

The latest volume by Miss Underhill is a sustained and impressive protest, approached from the experimental angle, against such tendencies in current think-

ing. It is the paradox of human nature that while our bodily and mental structure is adapted to deal with the natural order as presented to us by the senses, yet we remain obstinately reluctant to acquiesce in that natural order as our real home and abiding-place. The human race has always persisted in peering over the edge of its experience into some further province of Reality of which it believes itself to have some awareness. Despite all seductions to the contrary man remains incurably religious. And this must either be, says Miss Underhill, the progressive diffusion of a primal lie (as though religion *were* "original sin") or else overwhelming evidence of the real presence to human consciousness of some other order of Being which is, in fact, our true *patria*. Two worlds are ours: we live as on a frontier with another and fairer country just beyond us. Some of us are merely afraid of anything that belongs to "foreign parts"—savages cowering before a Ju-ju. Most of us at times hear its bells, and music such as we cannot make, but fitfully and only in great moments; and at times travellers cross into our country bringing stories of the folk who dwell in it, and carrying bunches of marvellous flowers. Rarely we meet those who have made their home there, understand its laws and institutions and have explored all its unmapped territory. These are the "Saints"—the religious experts. In other words, the experience of the mystics springs out of, and confirms and fortifies, that diffused and largely inarticulate consciousness of an Overworld which is found, in varying degrees of clarity, at different levels of wisdom and moral insight, wherever the race of Man is found. Nor can it be explained as a mere emergence out of evolutionary processes. For these visitations of artists, saints and lovers penetrate, transform and modify the merely natural order of development. Sometimes, as in the death of Socrates or in any heroic acceptance of an imperative, they even demand the complete immolation of the self-regarding and race-preserving impulses. We have thus, within our experience, evidence of a Supernatural ever forcing itself upon our consciousness—intimations of another Order to which in point of fact we belong. All response to goodness and beauty, all surrender to "higher" obligations, all experience of the impulse to worship—on however elementary a level—are, says the author, Man's responses to the Seeker who is ever calling to him.

This is developed in admirable chapters on the "given-ness" of the Supernatural in History, in Persons and in Things, i.e., in sacramental worship. And not the least achievement of the book is its studious avoidance of that spiritual snobbery which so easily besets the mystics. When we realize our relationship to the Other which is our home and our environment, we can afford to be wisely tolerant of all attempts—however pitiful—to realize and express the incommunicable. This book has the tolerance of true conviction. Miss Underhill must be thanked for this study, which is (I think) the best she has given us yet. We have only one request to make of her. Could she so assimilate von Hügel as not to reproduce his dreadful style? It tends to spoil her own excellent English. The reiteration, for instance, of "little creatures" on almost every page of the book becomes definitely irritating.

F. R. B.

CHRISTINA OF SWEDEN

The History of the Intrigues and Gallantries of Christina, Queen of Sweden. The Cayme Press. Limited edition. 31s. 6d.

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS'S daughter was one of the most remarkable women in history, and her reign forms a curious interlude in Swedish history. Gustavus had combined Protestantism, political ambition and military ability. His successor's tenure of

power was remarkable for flightiness of policy and vast alienations of crown property. After twenty years of rule she voluntarily abdicated, entered the Roman Catholic Church and spent most of her life in Rome, where she devoted herself to satisfying her two principal appetites—for men, and for science.

The reasons for the abdication are something of a mystery. Her "conversion" and the dissipation of royal property, not to mention discontinuity of policy, have been among the suggested causes. The true explanation seems to lie in her desire to startle the world with the spectacle of a queen voluntarily renouncing power, and to win a wider scope for her activities. These, to be plain, were chiefly amorous. It is difficult to believe in the reality of her conversion in the light of her after-life and the tone of her conversation. And she was outspokenly critical of the Popes of her acquaintance. She had personally known four, she said, and not one of them had any common sense. Her life as a queen was not wholly devoted to self-gratification. She attracted to the Swedish court some of the greatest minds of the age, among them Descartes, Grotius and Vossius. She patronized art and literature, and if her private adventures had been on a less extended scale she might have met with less opposition. It seems to have been feared that the resources of the State would be unequal to the strain of providing rewards for her favourites throughout a whole life-time.

Christina's after-life consisted mainly of a monotony of gallantries, broken by two attempts to regain the Swedish crown and by the murder of one of her lovers. For the details of her private life and that of her entourage there was in the seventeenth century a considerable public demand. The Cayme Press has published a handsome reprint, with hand-coloured illustrations by Alexina Ogilvie, of a contemporary English version of a French translation from the Italian, of an account of her scandalous life and court. It is rather French-English in places. The authenticity of the facts recorded need not be questioned or affirmed, for the general truth of the picture is hardly open to doubt.

A BOOK OF INNS

The Book of the Inn. Selected and edited by Thomas Burke. Constable. 7s. 6d.

MR. BURKE is a true lover of inns, obviously, but we miss something robust in his introduction. It is a fascinating, well-written introductory essay, but no more. The selections follow the line one would have expected, with a preponderance of Dickens, Cobbett, etc. There is the best of Smollett, Macaulay's passage on seventeenth-century inns, a vigorous bit of Surtees, the first appearance of Sam Weller and a very delightful traditional 'Waggoner's Song.' But we were particularly pleased to see included the rascal Skelton's doggerel about Elynour Rummung, the old ale-wife of Leatherhead:

Instead of coin and money,
Some bring her a coney,
And some a pot with honey,
Some a salt, and some a spoon,
Some their hose, and some their shoon;
Some run a good trot
With a skellet or a pot. . . .
Some loath to be espied,
Start in at the back side,
Over the hedge and pale,
And all for the good Ale.

Excellent, too, is Burnet's saying about Archbishop Leighton, who died at an inn: "He often said that if he were to choose a place to die in, it should be an inn; it looking like a pilgrim's going home."

Mr. Burke has done the selecting well, and the book may in future years console many of us made unhappy by the spread of the abominable "institute" and the motorist's hotel.

NEW FICTION

By L. P. HARTLEY

The Financier. By Theodore Dreiser. Constable. 7s. 6d.

Day of Fortune. By Norman Matson. Benn. 7s. 6d.

The Withered Root. By Rhys Davies. Holden. 7s. 6d.

Silver Nutmegs. By Vernon Knowles. Holden. 7s. 6d.

IT is a pity that Messrs. Constable, who have already published several of Mr. Dreiser's novels in England, do not append to each book as it appears some brief bibliography or indication of its "period." All Mr. Dreiser's books are worth reading; and if one knew whereabouts in his development they came their interest would be greatly enhanced.

'The Financier' seems to be an early work; the scene is laid in Philadelphia at the time of the Civil War, when the great banking houses of America were beginning to make their power felt. Mr. Dreiser has a wonderful power of conveying the changes of atmosphere that even a decade of American life brings with it: to those who have 'The American Tragedy' fresh in their minds, the life portrayed in 'The Financier' will seem strangely remote. Remote from contemporary America, but closer to us. 'The Financier' has not the intensity of 'The American Tragedy'; Mr. Dreiser has not tried to isolate his hero and expose him to the fierce glare of the artist's searchlight. Frank Cowperwood, for all his determination to become a master banker and retire with a million at the age of thirty-five, is subdued to his



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environment in a way that the luckless hero of 'The American Tragedy' never was.

Indeed, in this lies one of the contrasts between the two books, and incidentally, I suppose, between nineteenth and twentieth-century America: in the one the conditions and accepted values of life availed to keep the individual in a constant relation to the world in which he lived; they checked and limited him, but at the same time they gave him his proportion and his orientation: they fixed him in a perspective from which he could not escape. Cowperwood begins his financial career as an ambitious boy; marries a woman older than himself, has children, falls in love with the daughter of a fellow financial magnate, sails too near the wind in some discreditable business transaction, is ruined by his mistress's father, and sent to prison. His great vitality enables him to survive even this disgrace, and after his release he sets out successfully to make another fortune. His environment is cruel to him and makes him suffer; and yet he is so firmly planted in it and instinctively relies so much upon it, that ultimately he triumphs over circumstances.

In 'The American Tragedy' what a change has come over the scene! The hero is utterly *déclassé*, utterly isolated by his brief rise in the social scale: there is no stratum of society to which he can appeal, no established foundation of life, which, once he has got himself into trouble, does not slip beneath his feet. The forms of life have lost their meaning, and he is tragic not in relation to some accepted principle or virtue that he has outraged, but from the sheer mental and physical misery that he endures. His circumstances confer no meaning on his life; on the contrary they borrow such meaning as they have from the intensity of his unshared suffering.

Cowperwood is a different figure: he is still a sinner against society, whom society punishes and then forgives. Whether in prison or among his *objets d'art*, he has a recognizable position that his financial flair enables him to modify but never to ignore. He is a most unattractive character, portrayed in the manner of Balzac, without haste and with an inevitability rather than with a subtlety of touch. As one would expect, the book is far from well written, even though it lacks those apparently deliberate infelicities of style that disfigured the pages of 'The American Tragedy.' It has no graces of construction, hacking its way through its subject with masterful but awkward strokes. Mr. Dreiser sees his characters in plain drab colours; for the lures, whether spurious or genuine, that entice some artists into moments of poetry or ecstasy or self-conscious cleverness he has little use. He makes no allowances for the hopes, fears, feelings and prejudices of his readers, but goes straight on, and if he wants to mention the names of, say, twenty bankers, down they go, all in a row. He enters with the utmost minuteness in the financial transactions which bring about Cowperwood's downfall; he describes every detail of his trial. But he is always interested himself, and he nearly always conveys his interest to us.

Perhaps no living writer has his power of making credible the flight of time and the changes of human character. He is one of the most considerable of contemporary novelists and, for all the impartiality of his outlook, one of the most moral. His work is not incapable of beauty, as witness the purple passage which he permits himself at the close of 'The Financier.' It has an awkwardness, even a slight ludicrousness, but who could deny it grandeur?

And the three witches that hailed Macbeth upon the blasted heath might in turn have called to Cowperwood: "Hail to you, Frank Cowperwood, master of a great railway system! Hail to you, Frank Cowperwood, builder of a priceless mansion! Hail to you, Frank Cowperwood, patron of arts and possessor of endless riches! You shall be famed hereafter." But like the Weird Sisters, they would have lied, for in the glory was also the ashes of Dead Sea fruit—an understanding that could neither be inflamed by desire nor satisfied by luxury; a heart that was long since wearied by experience; a soul that was as bereft of illusion as a windless moon.

Mr. Norman Matson also describes an American boyhood. Peter's parents, Knut and Mary, are Scandinavians who have emigrated. Mr. Matson gives a very faithful picture of the conditions in which this family lived; of the smaller and lesser incidents and experiences that go to make up the fabric of their lives he omits nothing. But his method is so fragmentary and disjointed that interest oozes away between the paragraphs. He is always brief, always emphatic: we long for the husbanding of interest, for a crescendo passage; but the accent falls as regularly and as mechanically as the blows of a steam hammer. The book is extraordinarily concrete; it has few reflections, no bridge-passages, little that is superfluous. Yet its austerity is the austerity of a skeleton rather than of a work of art. And, as is the case in many realistic novels, when an emotional effect is required, when dots have got to be employed, the occasions selected for the exhibition of feeling are very strange ones:

Katinka, bringing smoking coffee-cups, lit an oil-lamp on the dresser . . .

This simple action clearly means more to Mr. Matson than it does to us. 'Day of Fortune' may prove to be of interest to the social historian; as a novel it is rather dull.

Hardy and Hawthorne have both drawn portraits of natives capable of strong religious emotion who have been at the time tormented by the lusts of the flesh. The subject is a painful one and needs much delicacy in the handling. This delicacy Mr. Rhys Davies does not possess. His hero, a Welsh collier, alternates between revivalist fervour and carnal appetite in a way that leaves us not so much moved and pitiful as satiated and disgusted. Between the two emotions, softening or reconciling their hard outlines, there is little; we are swept from the one to the other, the intermediate emotions being for the main part disregarded. There is nothing original in the treatment; even that stock figure of fiction, the kind-hearted prostitute, makes her appearance. As a story, 'The Withered Root' cannot be counted a success; but as a picture of Wales, particularly of the part that religious emotion plays in Welsh life, it is vigorous and valuable. It is sympathetic but impartial, and a far more convincing account than that of Mr. Caradoc Evans. Mr. Rhys Davies has at his command many of the qualities that make a good novelist; but in this book he has let himself be carried away by the obvious black and white of his theme—the contrast loses its hold on life, becomes an abstraction, and spoils the book.

Intermingled with a little that is silly and a little that is prosaic, there is a strain of genuine fantasy in 'Silver Nutmegs.' Mr. Knowles is more at home with the fantastic than with the actual; and sometimes his stories, for lack of proper ballast, are like a kite without a tail—they make awkward movements at a short distance above the ground. But every now and then they get completely clear of it, and their flight becomes untroubled. Never quite free from pretentiousness, they are still a welcome change from much realistic fiction.

SHORTER NOTICES

The Breath of the Desert. By Ferdinand Ossendowski. Allen and Unwin. 16s.4

PROFESSOR OSSENDOWSKI'S second book on the desert folk of Northern Africa is not, perhaps, in quite the same class as his first. His melodramatic methods make his failures the more conspicuous—and there are several of them here. On the other hand, there are some resounding successes. Take, for instance, his description of the conversion of a Moslem girl to Christianity. Her European lover (who tells the story to Professor Ossendowski) had been reading the New Testament to her:

She was especially impressed by my narrative of the life of Christ. She pondered a great deal over this and a few days later came to me and said:

"The Prophet Aissa (Jesus) was really not only a Prophet but also a God. Now I am certain of it."

"Whence this certainty?" I asked.

"A mere man can never entirely forget self for the sake of other men. God alone is capable of it. Aissa did that, so he must be a God, a good God!"

If such stories as that are true, they show the Arab mind in closer relation to ours than many Europeans would have supposed to be possible. Professor Ossendowski has an intuitive sympathy with these people which makes his impressions at least as valuable as, for instance, Pierre Loti's—not, of course, from a literary but purely from a psychological point of view.

Harriet Martineau. By Theodora Bosanquet. Etchells and Macdonald. 15s.

AS Carlyle and Browning discovered, Miss Martineau was a woman whose attentions could be formidable. Her versatility was still more formidable. By turns she played the part of poet and prophet of the Unitarians, popularizer of the economists, historian, novelist, mesmerist, Apostle of the Positivists. If we may be forgiven for so putting it, she was always positive. She passed from one dogmatic belief to another with considerable rapidity and an evangelist's fervour to convert the unbelieving. A surprising amount of her work has value—the Autobiography, the History, and the predigested Comte in two volumes, not to mention the innumerable Tales which can always be enjoyed for the wrong reasons. Miss Theodora Bosanquet's 'Essay in Comprehension,' as it is modestly sub-titled, is bright, ironical and sympathetic. Miss Bosanquet has perhaps almost too quick an eye for absurdities, but she has sympathy as well as humour and a real, though possibly incomplete, understanding. Miss Bosanquet's book is one to read.

Stories of Red Hanrahan and the Secret Rose. By W. B. Yeats. Illustrated and decorated by Norah McGuinness. Macmillan. 10s. 6d.

THESE stories were first published in 1897 and were re-written, "with Lady Gregory's help," ten years later. They represent the Celtic Twilight not at its brightest, form having been sacrificed almost entirely to atmosphere. In almost every case the author seems to promise a story and then to present us with a not very concrete symbol of nothing in particular. It is easy, however, to be enchanted by the lovely monotonous cadences of Mr. Yeats's prose. Such brave rhetoric as this speech of Cumhal son of Cormac may compensate us in part—but not wholly—for whatever of vital characterization and well-wrought story we are denied:

I am myself the poorest, for I have travelled the bare road, and by the edges of the sea; and the tattered doublet of parti-coloured cloth upon my back and the torn pointed shoes upon my feet have ever irked me, because of the towered city full of noble raiment which was in my heart. And I have been the more alone upon the roads and by the sea because I heard in my heart the rustling of the rose-bordered dress of her who is more subtle than Aengus the subtle-hearted, and more full of the beauty of laughter than Conan the Bald, and more full of the wisdom of tears than White-breasted Deirdre, and more lovely than a bursting dawn to them that are lost in the darkness.

Scattered throughout the book are beautiful snatches of lyric. There are also numerous illustrations in line. For these latter there is no excuse; they are tainted by that worst of affectations, the affectation of the primitive.

Tokenfield Papers. By Frank Swinnerton. Seckers. 7s. 6d.

WE think that Mr. Swinnerton, naming his essays by his village home, does Tokenfield wrong. These are Grub Street papers. They were written at Tokenfield, but for popular magazines, and the stamp of the latter is upon them. Of course Mr. Swinnerton cannot be undistinguished all the time, but he maintains a disconcerting level of commonplace. It is strange that a writer of his quality should not only put his signature to such stuff as his explanation of 'What I Demand of Life,' but even publish it in book form afterwards. "As for ease and comfort—once one has attained a reasonable degree of comfort, the rest is superfluity. Luxury is good for nobody except the manufacturer of luxuries. And habitual luxury is a bore, for it kills enjoyment of the occasional rare luxury. Wealth has no value in itself." When we read the essay on 'Why Gardeners are Gloomy' we hope that the author of 'Nocturne' and 'Young Felix' will find himself, and he nearly does. But his next paper on 'Advice' carries him back to book-stall ethics and he elaborates a platitude with all the abandon of an auctioneer. In his foreword Mr. Swinnerton admits that the homiletic note in these papers may be irksome to some minds and we agree. It is because we honour the novelist that we regret this medley of prattle and preaching.

Ten Years' Adventures among Landlords and Tenants. By Dan Rider. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

MR. DAN RIDER, joint author of the Rent Acts, honorary secretary of the War Rents League, orator, lobbyist, puissant champion of the man-in-the-street, has made a better and livelier

story out of the quarrels of landlords and tenants during the great war than many professional writers have made out of the war itself. We have seldom read a book which more precisely meets that rather over-worked definition, "readable." Mr. Rider tried to do ordinary "war work." He went to the Admiralty, and the Admiralty sent him to the Pigeon Department (which had its officers, incredibly, on the roof!), but the Pigeon Department threw him out; so he returned to his chosen job of protecting tenants against unpatriotic landlords (and sometimes lodgers against tenants) and made that his own special little side-show "for the duration." How well he did it is a matter of history. How amusingly he can write about it—how intelligently and impartially—is, however, a surprise, even to those who have heard Mr. Rider speak. The organized property-owners, as is well known, supported him throughout. His worst enemies were the extremists on the other side, who deliberately obstructed every attempt at reform, apparently wishing to see the poor suffer more and more in order to give them an excuse to "bust up the show."

The Chinese Puzzle. By Arthur Ransome. Allen and Unwin. 5s.

MR. ARTHUR RANSOME is not without political bias, but he is so undeniably the most intelligent and best-informed of the correspondents who have represented British newspapers during the troubles in China that any book of his on the complex Chinese puzzle deserves a careful reading. In reviewing the complexity of the problem Mr. Ransome reminds us that "our atlases devote no more space to China than to Ireland" and that "we have, therefore, to resist, in looking at China, a natural inclination to look through the wrong end of the telescope." Hankow seems very close to Canton on the map, and yet it took the Nationalist Army, moving as fast as possible, nearly a month to cover the distance between the two cities. The appalling lack of communications and the widespread illiteracy of the people make a delay of several years inevitable before the country can possibly exist as one coherent state. The difficulties of formulating a national policy are of course greatly increased by the complete lack of patriotism in most of the War Lords, of some of whom Mr. Ransome gives very amusing characteristic sketches. Despite all these drawbacks, the author feels that "a new generation of Chinese has grown up with enough Western knowledge to resent in a Western manner what any Westerner would feel to be national humiliation," and that we can hold our present privileges in China only against increasing hostilities. The book, in short, is a fervent appeal to British public opinion to support the moderate policy which has inspired Sir Austen Chamberlain, rather than the short-sighted ideas of merchants in Shanghai.

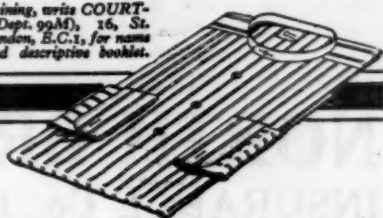
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CITY NOTES

Lombard Street, Thursday

LOOKING back one can fairly say that 1927 has been a year of surprises. It is significant to note that the centres of activity in the past year have been in the shares of luxury companies, such as gramophones, artificial silk and motor-car companies. Comparing prices we find that the gilt-edged market has remained, comparatively speaking, steady. Home Rails have proved a disappointment and, with the exception of Great Westerns, all the Ordinary stocks are standing considerably lower than the levels of a year ago, Southern Deferred showing a fall of 7 points, London and North Eastern Ordinary 10 points, while London, Midland and Scottish Ordinary have fallen 3 points. Turning to the foreign market, the outstanding feature has been the general rise in Brazilian Bonds. Chinese Bonds have fallen, while European bonds generally stand at higher levels than they did a year ago, particularly Belgian and French.

INDUSTRIALS

It is the industrial market, however, that shows the most amazing changes. A year ago British Celanese Ordinary shares were standing at 6s., and the Preference at 9s. 6d. Columbia Graphophones were 56s., and Gramophone shares (H.M.V.) 64s. 6d., while Vocalion were well under 10s. There are so many other shares that have risen substantially during the year that if they were all quoted here these notes would have the appearance of a portion of the Official List. The most disappointing movement is to be found in the fall of 15s. in the shares of the Imperial Tobacco Company, a fall which, in my opinion, is as unexpected as several of the rises above mentioned.

OTHER MARKETS

Turning to the oil market we find shares standing at lower levels than at the beginning of the year, and at greatly depreciated levels as compared with those ruling last February and March. The rubber market has been neglected throughout the whole period under review, which can also be said of mining shares. Tin shares, after enjoying considerable activity early in the year, have fallen back owing to the dullness of the metal. Diamond shares have been adversely influenced by the alluvial diamond discoveries in South Africa, and the extent of the fall here can be appreciated when it is noted that a year ago De Beers Deferred were standing at £17 12s. 6d. Off hand one would say that the Stock Exchange has enjoyed considerable activity in 1927. On analysis, although this will be found to be correct, it will be noted that the activity has, with the exception of spasmodic spurts elsewhere, been centred on the industrial market.

POLICY OF AMALGAMATION

One feature of 1927, which is likely to have a beneficial effect, not merely on prices during the next few years, but also on the general trade of the country, is that in that year the amalgamation of kindred businesses has grown in popularity. As it is contended by many authorities that the future salvation of several industries is dependent on intelligent amalgamation, this feature is one that can be commented on with considerable satisfaction. Perhaps the most important is the recently completed arrangement reached between Vickers and Armstrong. Others of minor importance

can be found in nearly every section of industrial activity in this country. Another aspect of 1927 which should play a big part in the future is the large increase in the number of trust and finance companies.

On the other side of the picture, 1927 has seen the birth of an extremely undesirable habit of issuing 1s. Deferred shares. These shares had their inception in the fertile brains of promoters who saw a possibility of placing £1 shares by appealing to the speculative tendencies of investors, by allotting 1s. shares only to subscribers of £1 shares; it has been fostered by the wave of speculation that has been an outstanding feature of Stock Exchange transactions during the last three months. Not merely have these 1s. Deferred shares led to most undesirable speculation, but their inception is largely responsible for misnaming other portions of a company's capital. Many new issues of Preference shares have been made in 1927, where the shares offered are most inaccurately described under this heading. While on the subject of undesirable speculation in 1927, reference must be made to the large number of public issues that have been made to finance dog-racing enterprises. From the point of view of the investor, these issues have been thoroughly unsound, and from the point of view of the public very undesirable. It is obvious that a large number of them will prove financial failures, and of the remainder it is probable the only people to reap the real benefit will be the promoters.

1928

There is no gainsaying that 1928 starts with an air of greater confidence than several of its recent predecessors. The most important thing for the New Year to give us, from a Stock Exchange point of view, is increased popularity for the gilt-edged market. Should this be realized, not merely will the conversion schemes that face the Treasury be carried through on an advantageous basis, but sound investment will once more come into its own at the expense of the undesirable speculation which has been so obvious of late. Unfortunately, however, it seems probable that 1928 will be swayed by political influences; an election in America, an election in France, and the approach of a General Election in this country, all are likely to play in turn a part on the stock markets. It is obviously a hazardous business to prophesy in times like the present, but I am nevertheless bold enough to venture the opinion that in 1928 we shall see a very distinct revival in the heavy industries in this country, on which so much depends. I am hopeful that Home Rails will regain some of their lost popularity. I look for results to justify higher levels for gramophone company shares and Columbia Graphophone shares. I consider electrical equipment shares, such as the cable-manufacturing companies and Siemens, will prove lucrative investments. I trust an arrangement will be reached between the cable-transmitting companies and the Marconi Company, a step which should prove most advantageous to both. I look for continued activity in art-silk shares. I am hopeful that in 1928 amalgamation of rubber companies suitably situated geographically will lead to an improvement in the rubber market. In the mining markets I hope for a recovery in the diamond industry, and I am emphatically of opinion that the price of tin will rise and that tin shares will be in increasing demand. As regards the South African gold-mining industry and the oil position the outlook is a little too obscure at the moment to express a very definite opinion.

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ACROSTICS

PUBLISHER'S PRIZE

For the Acrostic Competition there is a weekly prize:—A Book (selected by the competitor) reviewed in that issue of the SATURDAY REVIEW in which the problem was set, presented by the publisher.

RULES

1. The price of the book chosen must not exceed a guinea; it must be named by the solver when he sends his solution, and be published by a firm whose name appears on the list printed on the Competition Coupon.
 2. The coupon for the week must be enclosed.
 3. Envelopes must be marked "Competition," and addressed to the Acrostic Editor, SATURDAY REVIEW, 9 King Street, London, W.C.2.
- Competitors not complying with these Rules will be disqualified.
- Under penalty of disqualification, competitors must intimate their choice of books when sending solutions, which must reach us not later than the Thursday following the date of publication.
- Award of Prizes.—When solutions are of equal merit, the result will be decided by lot.
- To avoid the same book being chosen twice, books mentioned in 'New Books at a Glance' (which, in many instances, are reviewed at length in a subsequent issue of the paper) are not eligible as prizes.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 302

SILVESTER'S DAY MY ANNUAL GREETING BRINGS.

1. Clip at both ends the seat Will Cowper sings.
2. Take half a land which nowhere can be found.
3. In this, perhaps, our choicest books are bound.
4. Artful caress! Of spoon your core made prize.
5. Insect detach from beast of largest size.
6. When pressure's high, then this affords relief.
7. With it we formerly chastised the thief.
8. Great source of light to generations dead.
9. Me, puny swimmer in the brook, behold.
10. An incident you'll find in this number find.
11. Be yours that blossom, friends, and peace of mind!
12. To solve this light you need just half of each.
13. 'Tis his to learn, and likewise his to teach.

Solution of Acrostic No. 300

C	horu	S
nO		Un
L	oya	L
D	énouemen	T
D	istille	R
E	nem	Y
C	rustace	A
E	nco	Urage
M	eanin	G
B		Uck
E	fficaciou	S
R	esurrectionis	T

ACROSTIC No. 300.—The winner is Mr. W. A. Roberts, The Cottage, Udney Park Road, Teddington, who has chosen as his prize 'The Midnight Folk,' by John Masefield, published by Heinemann and reviewed in our columns on December 17 under the title of New Fiction. Twenty-two other competitors named this book, thirteen selected Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen's Memoirs, thirteen 'Haworth Parsonage,' etc., etc.

Other results held over.

Company Meeting

RIBON VALLEY (NIGERIA) TINFIELDS, LTD.

The ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the Ribon Valley (Nigeria) Tinfields, Ltd., was held on Thursday, December 22, at River Plate House, Finsbury Circus, E.C.2, Mr. R. Sewell presiding.

The Chairman said: The company was incorporated on October 26, 1910, with a capital of £200,000 in £1 shares, of which 40,007 were issued for cash and 110,000 were issued under agreement for the purchase of properties. It was subsequently proved by the engineers that these properties could not be worked economically. As a result, they were abandoned and the company remained more or less dormant until 1918, when the Niger Co. purchased all the issued shares and sold to the company certain mining areas in Northern Nigeria for the sum of £10,000. The consideration of £10,000 in cash was satisfied by calling up unpaid capital to that amount.

These particular areas have since that date been very successfully worked by the company, and to date the following dividends have been paid:

1922	2½% free of tax.
1923	1½% less tax.
1924,	Interim	...	2½% less tax.
	Final	...	3½% free of tax.
1925	7% free of tax.

The present board took over control of the company as from the end of December, 1926. In January last the £1 shares were divided into shares of 5s. each, but the issued capital remains the same as originally, i.e., £150,007.

The accounts now before you cover the period from January 1, 1926, to March 31, 1927, and show a net profit carried to the balance-sheet of £6,207 10s. 7d. I think the other items in the balance-sheet are self-explanatory, but I should point out that with regard to the Property Account standing at £140,603 15s. 3d., this includes the cost of the original properties amounting to £130,000. These are the properties to which I have referred in my opening remarks. We are satisfied that our present holdings are worth much more than the £140,603 15s. 3d., at which they stand in our books.

In the past the company has been working only the low lying part of its areas where water was easily available. The higher portions which, although containing very good deposits of tin, could not be so readily worked on account of the situation, had to await the time when water could be made available. Shareholders should therefore recognize the importance to be attached to the transfer to Ribon Valley of the Kwall Areas and water rights. This has made possible the scheme which has been embarked upon whereby water is being conducted from the recently acquired Kwall Areas by means of a nine-mile long pipeline, and from which we may reasonably hope for greatly increased production. We have utilised the available profit up to March 31 last for the expenditure on the pipeline instead of making a distribution to shareholders.

They also advise us that the output therefrom should be within the neighbourhood of 100 tons per annum. Further, the Kwall Areas apart from their value to us for the water which they control, are anticipated to yield an increased output by reason of prospecting operations now being conducted thereon. So that I think we can safely look forward to a minimum output of 250 tons per annum with hopes of a material increase. We have, at present, ore reserves, including proved and probable, of about 3,000 tons, which figure should be added to as prospecting work proceeds.

Since the date of the accounts a further 90 tons of tin have been won and realised at the ruling market prices and, in view of the present prospects, the directors have no hesitation in recommending the payment of an interim dividend for this current year of 7½ per cent., less tax.

The report was adopted unanimously.

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MOTORING

BY H. THORNTON RUTTER

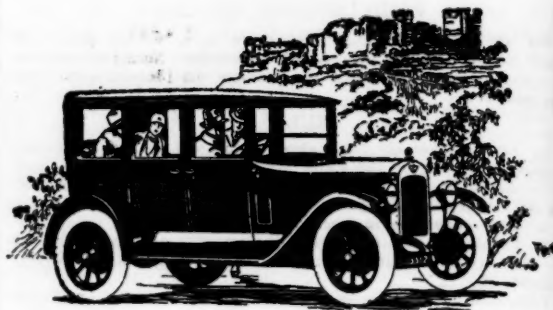
THE year ends with nearly two million motor vehicles licensed to use the roads in this country; they have brought a sum of nearly twenty-two million pounds into the Treasury. Out of this total, some eight hundred thousand vehicles are cars taxed on horse power, of which perhaps one third are used for business purposes and the remainder as private carriages. This is an increase of about one hundred thousand cars on the total of 1926. Commercial motor vehicles, carrying goods and passengers, have also increased by some twenty-six thousand over the preceding twelve months.

* *

Fuel, however, shows a large increase in the mileage run, in this country and all over the world; America's output of motor spirit will probably exceed nine thousand million gallons and over two hundred million gallons were refined in this country from crude oil. Last year the total consumption of petrol was placed, in round figures, at six hundred and seventy-seven million gallons. For the first six months of this year the total works out at nearly three hundred and eighty-three million gallons, and though the precise figures are not available for the twelve months, it is expected that this figure will be improved in the final half year, so that the total will probably exceed eight hundred million gallons in all. Figures are dull affairs as a rule, but they certainly show in this instance the position of the greater use of the motor vehicle. While it is considered that the average private owner runs between five and six thousand miles per annum, the motor mileage for this year is estimated to be ten thousand million miles distributed among all classes of vehicles. This mileage is increasing at the rate of about a thousand million miles a year, so that it is easy to see why an expenditure of over fifty million pounds is necessary on our roads to keep them in order.

* *

According to the Income Tax return, only two million six hundred thousand of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom pay income tax, so that with the total of nearly two million motor vehicles, which includes motor-bicycles, agricultural tractors, and the like, it will be seen that nearly every income-tax payer has some sort of form of motor transport, or in other words five income-tax payers for four motors. Taken, however, on the whole, England to-day has one motor vehicle to every thirty of its inhabitants, as compared with one to six in the U.S.A. The question now arises how near both countries are getting to saturation point. In this country, if we refer to income-tax payers as being the only class in a position to purchase motor vehicles, we cannot look forward to more than one-fourth increase, i.e., about six hundred thousand more vehicles on our roads, so that unless a greater number of persons is placed in that category than at present exists, this would bring the estimated saturation point within the next six years, judging by the increases which have taken place in the past. On the other hand, only a small portion of the commercial community have totally discarded horses for motor transport; there is a steady rise year after year of over twenty thousand goods vehicles to the total of those already licensed. Therefore, while the motor-car as a carriage apparently will come to saturation point in six years, the expansion of the commercial motor vehicle has almost a generation to run before the horse disappears as a draught animal.



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